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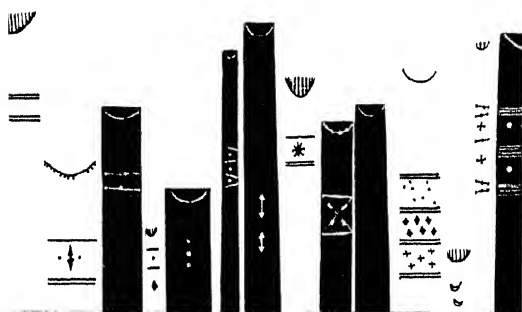
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S E R M O N S

PREACHED UPON

SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

BY ROBERT SOUTH, D.D.

PREBENDARY OF WESTMINSTER, AND CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD.

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THE
CHIEF HEADS OF THE SERMONS.

VOL. II.

SERMON I.

THE MESSIAH'S SUFFERINGS FOR THE SINS OF THE PEOPLE.

ISAIAH LIII. 8.

For the transgression of my people was he stricken. P. 1.

THERE are several opinions concerning the person here spoken of by the prophet, 1. But setting aside those of later interpreters, who differ even among themselves, 2, we may safely with all the ancients affirm him to be the Messiah, 4, and this Messiah to be no other than Jesus of Nazareth, *ib.* In these words we may consider,

I. That he was stricken; his suffering, 5; in its latitude and extent, *ib.*; in its intenseness and sharpness, 7; and in its author, which was God, 8.

II. That he was stricken for transgression; the quality of his suffering was penal and expiatory; he was punished for sins past, not to prevent sins for the future, 10. He bore our sins, his soul was made an offering for sin, 11, 12. He was qualified to pay an equivalent compensation to the divine justice, by the infinite dignity and the perfect innocence of his person, 12.

III. That he was stricken for God's people; the cause of his suffering, 13. Man's redemption proceeds from a twofold covenant; one of suretiship, the other of grace, *ib.*; and, without any violation of the divine justice, Christ suffered for men; upon the account of his voluntary consent; and because of his relation to them, as he was their king and head, and their surety, 14.

Thence we should learn also to suffer for Christ,

1. By self-denial and mortification, 15.

2. By cheerfully undergoing troubles and afflictions in this world, 15.

SERMON II.

ON THE RESURRECTION.

ACTS II. 24.

Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. P. 17.

The necessary belief of a future state has been confirmed by revelation, and exemplification, 17; chiefly in that of the resurrection of Christ, 18; whom

I. God hath raised up; such an action proclaiming an omnipotent cause, 19. And,

II. The manner of his being raised was by having loosed the pains of death, 20; with an explication of the word *pains*, 21. And,

III. The ground of his resurrection was the impossibility of his being holden of it, 22; which impossibility was founded upon,

1. The hypostatical union of Christ's human nature to his divine, 22.
 2. The immutability of God, in respect of his eternal decree, 23, and of his promise, 24.
 3. The justice of God, 25.
 4. The necessity of Christ's being believed in as a Saviour, 26.
 5. The nature of Christ's priesthood, 27.
- The belief of Christ's resurrection affords us,
1. The strongest dehortation from sin, 28.
 2. The most sovereign consolation against death, 29.

SERMON III.

THE CHRISTIAN PENTECOST.

1 COR. XII. 4.

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. P. 30.

The Holy Ghost, the design of whose mission was to confirm Christianity, did it by an effusion of miraculous gifts upon the first messengers of it, 30. In which we consider,

- I. What those gifts were, 31, either,
 1. Ordinary, conveyed to us by the mediation of our own endeavours, 31, or,
 2. Extraordinary, immediately from God alone, 32; such as the gift of tongues, of healing the sick and raising the dead, of prophecy, *ib.*; the continuation of which miraculous gifts in the church was but for a time, 33.
- II. The diversity of those gifts, 35; which consisted,
 1. In variety, 35.
 2. Not in contrariety, 40.
- III. The consequences of their emanation from one and the same Spirit, 40; which are,
 1. That this Spirit is God, and hath a personal subsistence, 40.
 2. That every one of us may learn humility under, and contentment with his own abilities, 42.
 3. That it affords a touchstone for the trial of spirits, 43; as in the gift of prophecy, of healing, *ib.*, of discerning of spirits, of divers tongues, *ib.*, of interpreting, 44. By which trial we may discover some men's false pretences to gifts of the Spirit, *ib.*
 4. That knowledge and learning are not opposite to grace, 45.

SERMON IV.

THE CARE OF PROVIDENCE IN DEFENCE OF KINGS.

PSALM CXLIV. 10.

It is he that giveth salvation unto kings. P. 47.

The relation between prince and subject involves in it obedience and protection; and the same relation is between princes and God, who gives salvation unto kings, 47; whose providence over them,

- I. Is peculiar and extraordinary, 48; besides the usual operation of causes, *ib.*; contrary to the design of expert persons, *ib.*; beyond the power of the cause employed, 49.
- II. Making use of extraordinary means, 49, as,
 1. By endowing them with a more than ordinary sagacity, 49.
 2. By giving them a singular courage and resolution, 51.
 3. By a strange disposition of events for their preservation, 52.
 4. By inclining the hearts of their people towards them, 53.

5. By rescuing them from unseen and unknown mischiefs, 54.
6. By imprinting an awe of their authority on the minds of their subjects, 55.
7. By disposing their hearts to virtue and piety, 56.
- III. The reason of this particular providence is,
 1. Because they are the greatest instruments to support government; to the ends of which monarchy is best adapted; and the greatness of which most depends upon their personal qualifications, 58.
 2. Because they have the most powerful influence upon the concerns of religion, 60.
- IV. Hence, 1. Princes may learn their duty towards God, 62. And, 2. Subjects may learn theirs towards their prince, *ib.*

SERMON V.

THE SCRIBE INSTRUCTED, &c.

MATT. XIII. 52.

Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old. P. 64.

Christ here gives the character of a preacher or evangelist, 64, in these words; where we are to consider,

1. What is meant by the scribe among the Jews, either as a civil or a church officer, 65.

2. What it is to be instructed for the kingdom of heaven, 66.

3. What it is to bring out of one's treasure things new and old, 67.

And then by applying all this to the minister of the gospel, we are to examine,

I. His qualifications, 69.

1. A natural ability of the faculties of his mind, 69, judgment, *ib.*, memory, 70, invention, *ib.*

2. An habitual preparation by study, 71, in point of learning and knowledge, 72, of significant speech and expression, 74.

II. The reason of their necessity, 76, viz.,

1. Because the preacher's work is to persuade, 76.

2. Because God himself was at the expense of a miracle to endow the first preachers with them, 79.

3. Because the dignity of the subject, which is divinity, requires them, 79.

III. The inferences from these particulars, 80.

1. A reproof to such as discredit the ordinance of preaching, 85, and the church itself, *ib.*, either by light and comical, 80, or by dull and heavy discourses, 81.

2. An exhortation to such, who design themselves for the ministry, to bestow a competent time in preparing for it, 86.

SERMON VI.

PROSPERITY EVER DANGEROUS TO VIRTUE.

PROV. I. 32.

The prosperity of fools shall destroy them. P. 89.

The misery of all foolish or vicious persons is, that prosperity itself to them becomes destructive, 89. Because,

I. They are ignorant or regardless of the ends wherefore God sends it, 90, viz.,

1. To try and discover what is in a man, 90.

2. To encourage him in gratitude to his Maker, 91.

3. To make him helpful to society, 90.

II. Prosperity is prone

1. To abate men's virtues, 92.

2. To heighten their corruptions, 95, such as pride, *ib.*, luxury and uncleanness, 96, profaneness, *ib.*

III. It indisposes men to the means of their amendment, 97, rendering them

1. Averse to all counsel, 97.

2. Unfit for the sharp trials of adversity, under which they either despond, or blaspheme, 98.

Therefore that prosperity may not be destructive, a man ought

1. To consider the uncertainty of it, 99. And

2. How little he is bettered by it, 99.

3. To use the severe duties of mortification, 100.

SERMON VII.

SHAMELESSNESS IN SIN THE CERTAIN FORERUNNER OF DESTRUCTION.

JER. VI. 15.

Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them, they shall be cast down, saith the Lord. P. 101.

Shamelessness in sin is the certain forerunner of destruction, 101; in the prosecution of which proposition we may observe,

I. What shame is, 102, and how it is more effectual than law in its influence upon men, with respect to the evil threatened by it, and to the extent of that evil, 104.

II. How men cast off that shame, 106.

1. By the commission of great sins, 106.

2. By a custom of sinning, 107.

3. By the examples of great persons, 108.

4. By the observation of the general practice, 108.

5. By having been once irrecoverably ashamed, 109.

III. The several degrees of shamelessness in sin, 110.

1. To show respect to sinful persons, 110.

2. To defend sin, 111.

3. To glory in it, 112.

IV. The reasons why shamelessness is so destructive, 113.

1. Because it presupposes those actions which God seldom lets go unpunished, 113, and,

2. It has a destructive influence upon the government of the world, 113.

V. The judgments, by which it procures the sinner's ruin, 114. A sudden and disastrous death, 115. War and desolation, *ib.* Captivity, *ib.*

Lastly, An application is made of the whole, 116.

SERMON VIII.

CONCEALMENT OF SIN NO SECURITY TO THE SINNER.

NUMB. XXXII. 23.

Be sure your sin will find you out. P. 118.

These words reach the case of all sinners, 118.

I. Sin upon a confidence of concealment, 118. For,

1. No man engages in sin, but as it bears some appearance of good, 119.

2. Shame and pain are by God made the consequents of sin, 119.

II. Take up that confidence, 121, upon,

1. Their own success, 121.

2. The success of others, 123.
3. An opinion of their own cunning, 124.
4. The hope of repentance, 124.

III. Are at last certainly defeated, 126. Because,

1. The very confidence of secrecy is the cause of the sinner's discovery, 127.
 2. There is sometimes a providential concurrence of unlikely accidents for a discovery, 127.
 3. One sin sometimes is the means of discovering another, 128.
 4. The sinner may discover himself through frenzy and distraction, 129, or be forced to it
 5. By his own conscience, 130.
 6. He may be suddenly struck by some notable judgment, 131, or,
- Lastly, His guilt will follow him into another world, if he should chance to escape in this, 132.

SERMON IX.

THE RECOMPENCE OF THE REWARD.

HEB. XI. 24—26.

By faith Moses, when he came to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of reward. P. 134.

A Christian is not bound to sequester his mind from respect to an ensuing reward, 134. For,

I. Duty considered barely as duty is not sufficient to engage man's will, 136. Because

1. The soul has originally an averseness to duty, 136.
2. The affections of the soul are not at all gratified by any thing in duty, 137.
3. If duty of itself was a sufficient motive, then hope and fear would be needless, 140.

With an answer to some objections, 144.

II. A reward and a respect to it are necessary to engage man's obedience, 148, not absolutely, but with respect to man's present condition, 149. The proof whereof may be drawn from scripture, and the practice of all law-givers, 149.

Therefore it is every man's infinite concern to fix to himself a principle to act by, which may bring him to his beatific end, 151.

SERMON X.

ON THE GENERAL RESURRECTION.

ACTS XXIV. 15.

Having hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. P. 153.

It is certain that there must be a general retribution, and, by consequence, a general resurrection, 153.

The belief of which, though

- I. It is exceeding difficult, because
 1. Natural reason is averse to it, 155.
 2. This averseness is grounded partly upon many improbabilities, 156, partly upon downright impossibilities charged upon it, 157. Yet
- II. Is founded upon sufficient and solid grounds, 159, which will appear
 1. By answering the objections of improbability and impossibility, 159.

2. By positive arguments, 164.

III. Gaineth much worth and excellency from all those difficulties, 169. For from hence,

1. We collect the utter insufficiency of bare natural religion, 169.

2. We infer the impiety of Socinian opinions concerning the resurrection, 171.

SERMON XI.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE BLESSED TRINITY.

COL. II. 2.

To the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.
P. 174.

These words examined and explained, prove the plurality of persons in the divine nature a great mystery, to be acknowledged by all Christians, 174; which will appear by showing

I. What conditions are required to denominate a thing a mystery, 176, viz.

1. That it be really true, and not contrary to reason, 176.

2. That it be above the reach of mere reason to find it out, before it be revealed, 179.

3. That, being revealed, it be yet very difficult for, if not above finite reason fully to comprehend it, 183.

II. That all these conditions meet in the article of the Trinity, 176—184.

With an account of the blasphemous expressions and assertions of the Socinians, 185.

Lastly, Since this article is of so great moment, it is fit to examine

1. The causes which have unsettled and destroyed the belief of it, 188. Such as representing it in a figure, *ib.*, expressing it by bold and insignificant terms, 189, building it on texts of scripture which will evince no such thing, *ib.*

2. The means how to fix and continue it in the mind, 190, by acquiescing in revelation, *ib.*, and suppressing all over-curious inquiries into the nature of it, *ib.*

SERMONS XII. XIII.

ILL-DISPOSED AFFECTIONS THE CAUSE OF ERROR IN JUDGMENT.

2 THESS. II. 11.

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie. P. 192.

A very severe judgment is here denounced against them who receive not the love of the truth, 193; which will be best understood by showing

I. How the mind of man can believe a lie, 194, either

1. Through the remoteness of the faculty from its object, 195, or

2. Through some weakness or disorder in it, 196.

II. What it is to receive the love of truth, 196, viz. to esteem, *ib.*, and to choose it, 199. And consequently, what it is, not to receive it, *ib.*

III. How the not receiving the love of truth into the will disposes the understanding to delusion, 201.

1. By drawing the understanding from fixing its contemplation upon truth, 201.

2. By prejudicing it against it, 202.

3. By darkening the mind, which is the peculiar malignity of every vice, 203.

IV. How God can properly be said to send men delusions, 204.

1. By withdrawing his enlightening influence from the understanding, 205.

2. By commissioning the spirit of falsehood to seduce the sinner, 207.

3. By providential disposing of men into such circumstances of life as have an efficacy to delude, 208.

4. By his permission of lying wonders, 209.

V. Wherein the greatness of this delusion consists, 212.

1. In itself; as it is spiritual, and directly annoys a man's soul, 213, and more particularly blasts his understanding, 215.

2. In its consequences, 218, as it renders the conscience useless, *ib.*, and ends in a total destruction, 219.

VI. What deductions may be made from the whole, 220.

1. That it is not inconsistent with God's holiness to punish one sin with another, 220.

2. That the best way to confirm our faith about the truths of religion is to love and acknowledge them, 223.

3. That hereby we may be able to find out the true cause of atheism, 225, and fanaticism, 226.

SERMONS XIV. XV.

ON COVETOUSNESS.

LUKE XII. 15.

And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. P. 229.

It is natural for man to aim at happiness, the way to which seems to be an abundance of this world's good things, and covetousness is supposed the means to acquire it. But our Saviour confutes this in these words, 229, which contain

First, A dehortation, 230, wherein we may observe

I. The author of it, Christ himself, 231, the Lord of the universe, 232, depressed to the lowest estate of poverty, *ib.*

II. The thing we are dehorted from, covetousness, 232, by which is not meant a prudent forecast and parsimony, 233, but an anxious care about worldly things, attended with a distrust of providence, 234, a rapacity in getting, 235, by all illegal ways, 237, a tenaciousness in keeping, 238.

III. The way we are dehorted from it: "Take heed and beware," 240. For it is very apt to prevail upon us, by its near resemblance to virtue, *ib.*, the plausibility of its pleas, 241, the reputation it generally gives in the world, 243. And there is a great difficulty in removing it, 244.

Secondly, The reason of that dehortation, 247, that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth," 248. Because

I. In the getting of them men are put upon the greatest toils and labours, 248, run the greatest dangers, 249, commit the greatest sins, 252. And

II. When they are gotten, are attended with excessive cares, 253, with an insatiable desire of getting more, 254, are exposed to many temptations, 256, to the malice and envy of all about them, 257.

III. The possession of earthly riches is not able to remove those things which chiefly render men miserable, 258, such as affect his mind, *ib.*, or his body, 259.

IV. The greatest happiness this life is capable of, may be enjoyed without that abundance, 260.

SERMON XVI.

NO MAN EVER WENT TO HEAVEN WHOSE HEART WAS NOT THERE BEFORE.

MATT. VI. 21.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. P. 264.

These words concerning men's heart's being fixed upon his treasure or chief good, 264, may be considered

I. As an entire proposition in themselves, 265.

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1. Supposing that every man has something which he accounts his treasure, 265, which appears from the activity of his mind, *ib.*, and the method of his acting, 266.

2. Declaring that every man places his whole heart upon that treasure, 267, by a restless endeavour to acquire it, *ib.*, by a continual delight in it, 269, by supporting himself with it in all his troubles, *ib.*, by a willingness to part with all other things to preserve it, 270.

II. As they enforce the foregoing precept in the 19th and 20th verses; wherein the things on earth and the things in heaven are represented as rivals for men's affections, 272, and that the last ought to claim them in preference to the other, will be proved

1. By considering the world, how vastly inferior it is to the worth of man's heart, 273.

2. By considering the world in itself, 274, how all its enjoyments are perishing, 275, and out of our power, 276. And on the contrary, heaven is the exchange God gives for man's heart, 274, and the enjoyments above are indefectible, endless, 276, and not to be taken away, *ib.*

The improvement of these particulars is to convince us of the extreme vanity of most men's pretences to religion, 277.

SERMON XVII.

ON THE EDUCATION OF YOUTH.

PROV. XXII. 6.

Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. P. 281.

The rebellion of forty-one has had ever since a very pernicious influence upon this kingdom, 281. To hinder the mischief whereof, Solomon's advice is best, to plant virtue in youth, in order to ensure the practice of it in a man's mature or declining age, 283. For since every man is naturally disposed to evil, and this evil principle will (if not hindered) pass into action, and those vicious habits will, from personal, grow national; and no remedy against this can be had but by an early discipline; it is absolutely necessary that the minds of youth should be formed with a virtuous, preventing education, 285, which is the business of

1. Parents; who ought to deserve that honour, which their children must pay them; and to instil into their hearts early principles of their duty to God and their king, 287.

2. Schoolmasters; whose influence is more powerful than of preachers themselves, 290, and who ought to use great discretion in the management of that charge, 291.

3. The clergy; who should chiefly attend first upon catechizing, 293, then confirmation, 294, and lastly, instructing them from the pulpit, not failing often to remind them of obedience and subjection to the government, 296.

Lastly, it is incumbent upon great men to suppress conventicling schools or academies, 298, and to countenance all legal free grammar schools, 299.

SERMON XVIII.

PRETENCE OF CONSCIENCE NO EXCUSE FOR REBELLION.

JUDGES XIX. 30.

And it was so, that all that saw it said, There was no such deed done or seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day: consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds. P. 302.

These words were occasioned by a foul and detestable fact, which for want of kingly government, happened in one of the tribes of Israel: but may be

applied to express the murder of King Charles the First, 302. The unparalleled strangeness of which deed will appear, if we consider,

I. The qualities, human accomplishments, and personal virtues of the person murdered, 305.

II. The gradual preparations to such a murder, a factious ministry and a covenant, 308, and their rebellious catechism, 309.

III. The actors in this tragical scene, 311.

IV. Their manner of procedure in it, 312, openly, *ib.*, cruelly, 313, and with pretences of conscience and protestations of religion, 316.

V. The fatal consequences of it, 316, such as were of a civil, *ib.*, or a religious concern, 317.

Lastly, Hereupon we ought to take advice, 319, and consider, that our sins have been the cause of our calamities; and that the best way to avoid the same evil is to sin no more, 320.

SERMON XIX.

SATAN HIMSELF TRANSFORMED INTO AN ANGEL OF LIGHT.

COR. XI. 14.

And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. P. 322.

These words suppose that there is a devil, and forewarn us against his deceitful disguises, 322; and the sense of the words may be prosecuted by showing,

I. What influence he has upon the soul, and how he conveys his fallacies, 324.

1. In moving, or sometimes altering the humours of the body, 324.

2. In suggesting the ideas of things to the imagination, 325.

3. In a personal possession of man, 326.

II. Several instances, wherein he, under the mask of light, has imposed upon the Christian world, 327, making use,

1. Of the church's abhorrence of polytheism, to bring in Arianism, 327.

2. Of the zealous adoration of Christ's person, to introduce the superstitious worship of popery, 328.

3. Of the shaking off of popery, to bring in the two extremes of Socinianism, 332, and enthusiasm, 337, with a comparison of this last with popery, 338.

III. Certain principles, whereby he is like to repeat his cheats upon the world, 342.

1. By making faith and free grace undermine the necessity of a good life, 342

2. By opposing the power of godliness irreconcilably to all forms, 343.

3. By making the kingdom of Christ oppose the kingdoms of the world, 344.

Therefore we ought not to cast the least pleasing look upon any of his insidious offers, 346, but encounter him with watchfulness and prayer, 347.

SERMON XX.

THE CERTAINTY OF OUR SAVIOUR'S RESURRECTION.

JOHN XX. 29.

Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed. P. 348.

The resurrection of a body before its total dissolution is easier to be believed than after it; and it was this last sort of resurrection which puzzled Thomas's reason, 350, with various objections, 351. Which, after some preliminary considerations, *ib.*, are severally proposed, and answered under eight heads, 352—359, together with a confutation of the lie invented by the Jews, 359. Then, all objections being removed, Christ's resurrection is proposed to our belief upon certain and sufficient grounds, 361, *viz.*

1. The constant, uniform affirmation of such persons as had sufficient means to be informed of the truth, 361, and were of an unquestionable sincerity, 362.

2. The miracles which confirmed the apostle's words, 363.

Lastly, that such tradition has greater reason for its belief, than can be suggested for its disbelief, 363.

Thence we ought to admire the commanding excellency of faith, which can force its way through the opposition of carnal reason, with an entire submission to divine revelation, 365.

SERMON XXI

OBEDIENCE FOR CONSCIENCE SAKE THE DUTY OF GOOD SUBJECTS.

ROMANS XIII. 5.

Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.
P. 368.

In these words there is,

I. A duty enjoined, viz. subjection, 368, which the believers of the church of Rome are commanded to pay Nero, 369.

II. The ground of this duty, "for conscience sake," 370. In which we are to consider,

1. The absolute unlawfulness of resistance, 372, notwithstanding the doctrine of the sons both of Rome, *ib.*, and of Geneva, 375, of the Scotch, 376, and English puritans, 377. With an account how far human laws bind the conscience, 378.

2. The scandal which resistance casts upon Christianity, 380.

SERMON XXII.

MAN'S INABILITY TO FIND OUT GOD'S JUDGMENTS.

ROMANS XI. 33.

How unsearchable are his ways, and his judgments past finding out! P. 382.

The methods of divine Providence, whereof King Charles's return (the subject of this day's commemoration) is an eminent instance, surpass all human apprehension, 383; and the most advanced wisdom is an incompetent judge of the ways of God, with respect,

I. To the reason or cause of them, 384. For men are prone to assign such causes as are either false, as that the happy in this life are the proper objects of God's love; the miserable, of his hatred, *ib.*; and that prosperity always attends innocence, and sufferings, guilt, 387; or imperfect, 391.

II. To the event or issue of them, 392. For men usually prognosticate the event of an action, according to the measure of the ability of second agents, *ib.*, or from success formerly gained under the same or less probable circumstances, *ib.*, or according to the preparations made for it, and the power employed in it, 393.

Hence we may infer,

1. The folly of making success the rule of our actions, 395.

2. The necessity of depending upon Providence, 397.

3. The impossibility of a rational dependence, but in the way of lawful courses, 397.

SERMONS XXIII. XXIV.

ENTRUSIASTS NOT LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

ROMANS VIII. 14.

For as many are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. P. 400.

It being clear that the Spirit of God in some degree leads and helps all men, 400, it will be necessary, in the prosecution of these words, to show,

I. How the Spirit is said to be in men, 401, viz. two ways allowable by scripture, either,

1. Substantially, as he filleth all things, 401.

2. By the effects he produces in them, 401.

For the way pretended to by the Familists, viz. a personal indwelling in believers, is not to be proved either from reason or from scripture, 402.

II. How men are led by the Spirit, 403, viz.

1. Outwardly, by his prescribing rules of actions in the written word, 404.

2. Inwardly, by his illumination of the judgment, and bending of the will, 404.

For the way pretended to by enthusiasts, viz. his speaking inwardly to them, 405, is not allowable; because,

1. Scripture is by the Spirit itself declared a rule both necessary and sufficient, 406.

2. That inward speaking is seldom alleged but for the patronage of such actions as cannot upon any other account be warranted, 406.

3. It is contrary to the experience of the generality of Christians, 407.

4. It opens a door to all profaneness and licentiousness of living, 407.

5. No man can assure himself or others, that the Spirit speaks inwardly to him, neither from the quality of the thing spoken, nor from reason, scripture, or miracles, 409.

An examination of what the pretenders to an immediate impulse of the Spirit plead from several scripture examples, 415, as of Abraham, 419, Jacob, 420, the Egyptian midwives, Moses, *ib.*, Phinehas, *ib.*, the Israelites, 421, Samson, 422, Ehud, Jael, *ib.*, Elijah, 423. Also with four observations relating to the examination of these examples, 416—419.

III. What is meant by being the sons of God; viz. by imitation, 423.

IV. We may infer from the foregoing particulars,

1. That pretenders to such an inward voice of the Spirit, in opposition to God's written word, are not to be endured in the communion of a Christian church, as being the highest reproach to religion, 425. Nor,

2. To be tolerated in the state, as having a pernicious influence upon society, 426.

SERMON XXV.

THANKFULNESS FOR PAST MERCIES THE WAY TO OBTAIN FUTURE BLESSINGS.

ISAIAH v. 4.

What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? P. 428.

From these words a parallel is drawn between the sins of the Jews and those of this nation, 428, by considering in the text,

I. The manner of God's complaint, which runs in a pathetic interrogation, 429, importing in it a surprise grounded upon,

1. The strangeness, 429, and,

2. The unusual indignity of the thing, 430.

II. The complaint itself, 430, wherein is included,

1. The person complaining, God himself, 430.

2. The persons complained of, the Jews, 431.

3. The ground of the complaint, 431, which appears by observing,

(1.) How God dealt with them, by committing his oracles to them, 432, by his miraculous mercies, 433, and by his judgments for their correction, 434.

(2.) How they dealt with God by way of return, 436. And they are charged with injustice and oppression, ver. 7, *ib.*, rapacity and covetousness, ver. 8, *ib.*, luxury and sensuality, ver. 11, 12, 437.

4. The issue of the complaint, ver. 5, 6, viz. The bereaving them of all their defences, 438, of their laws, and military force, 439, upon the failure of which will follow these evils;

1. From within; a growth of all sects and factions, 439.

2. From without; to be laid waste by a foreign enemy, 440.

SERMON XXVI.

THE NATURE, CAUSES, AND CONSEQUENCES OF ENVY.

JAMES III. 16.

For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. P. 441.

In order to prove, that of all sins there is none of greater malignity and baseness than envy, 441, it will be necessary to show,

I. What it is, and wherein its nature consists, 441.

II. What are its causes, 443, on the part,

1. Of the person envying, 443, viz. great malice and baseness of nature, *ib.*, an unreasonable grasping ambition, 444, an inward sense of a man's own weakness, 445, idleness, 446.

2. Of the person envied, 447, viz. great natural parts and abilities, *ib.*, the favour of princes and great persons, 448, wealth and prosperity, 449, esteem and reputation, 451.

III. What are its effects, "confusion and every evil work," 452.

1. To the envious person himself, 452.

2. To the person envied, 453, viz., a busy prying into all his concerns, *ib.*, calumny and detraction, 454, his utter ruin and destruction, 455.

IV. What use and improvement may be made of this subject, 456, by learning,

1. The extreme vanity of the best enjoyments of this world, 456.

2. The safety of the lowest, and the happiness of a middle condition, 457.

3. The necessity of depending upon Providence, 457.

SERMON XXVII.

CHRIST'S PROMISE THE SUPPORT OF HIS DESPISED MINISTERS.

LUKE XXI. 15.

For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. P. 460.

Our Saviour, before his death, in order to support the ministers of his church against what should befall them after it, leaves with them this promise, 460, in the words of which is implied,

I. A prediction, that the apostles should not fail of adversaries, 461, which would oppose them both in word, by gainsaying, 464, and indeed by resisting, 466.

II. The promise itself of such an assistance as should overcome all that opposition, 467, very necessary to remove the fears which he foresaw would be apt to seize their spirits, *ib.* In which promise we may consider,

1. The thing promised, viz., a mouth, 468, or an ability of speaking, with great perspicuity, 469, simplicity, 470, zeal, 471, and wisdom, or a prudence in action and behaviour, 472, by opposing neither things nor persons any further than they stood in their way, *ib.*, and opposing them resolutely whenever they did, 473. Which two, viz., "mouth and wisdom," being united, have the greatest advantage, 474.

2. The person promising, viz., Christ, 474.

3. The means, by which that promise was performed, viz., the effusion of the Holy Ghost, 474.

SERMON XXVIII.

FALSE METHODS OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT EXPLODED.

GAL. II. 5.

To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. P. 476.

From the way of St. Paul's dealing with the schismatics of his time, a pattern may be drawn how to deal with our dissenters, viz., not to yield up the least lawful received constitutions of our church to their demands or pretences, though never so urging and importunate, 476—479. The prosecution of which assertion shall be managed by considering,

I. The pretences alleged by dissenters against our church's ceremonies, 480. As,

1. The unlawfulness of those ceremonies, 480.

2. Their inexpediency, 481.

3. Their smallness, 482. Which three exceptions are confuted severally, 480—483.

II. The consequences of yielding or giving them up, 483. Which will appear very dangerous, if we observe,

1. The temper and disposition of those men who press for such a compliance, 483.

2. The effects of such a compliance heretofore, 484, and those which a comprehension is likely to produce for the future, 485, together with a discourse upon toleration, 486.

III. The good and great influence of a strict adherence to the constitutions of our church, in procuring the settlement of it, and preserving the purity of the gospel amongst us, 491, because it is the most sovereign means,

1. To preserve unity in the church, 491.

2. To beget in the church's enemies an opinion of the requisiteness of those usages, 492.

3. To possess them with an awful esteem of the conscience of the governors of the church, 494.

Lastly, A brief recapitulation is made of all the forealleged reasons and arguments, why (according to St. Paul's example and dealing with the Judaizing Christians) we are by no means to give place in the least to our dissenters, 496.

* * For Chief Heads of Sermons XXIX. and XXX. see vol. i. p. xviii.

S E R M O N S.

SERMON I.

THE MESSIAH'S SUFFERINGS FOR THE SINS OF THE PEOPLE.

[Preached before the University at Christ Church, Oxford, on Good Friday, 1668.]

ISAIAH LIII. 8, latter part.

For the transgression of my people was he stricken.

THIS great and eloquent prophet, the evangelist of the Jewish church, as without any impropriety he may be called, from ver. 13 of the foregoing chapter to the end of this, seems rapt up with the contemplation of a great person under strange and unusual afflictions, whose character, with all the heights of rhetoric which the genius of grief and prophecy together could raise him to, he here sets himself with full purpose to describe. In all which description there is no one passage which does not speak something extraordinary and supernatural of the person described, and withal represent the describer of it in the highest degree of ecstasy and rapture; so that nothing could transcend the height of the expression but the sublimity of its subject. For still it fastens upon him the marks and tokens of something more than a man, indeed more than a creature, ascribing actions to him which surmount any created power, and so visibly, upon all principles of reason, above the strength and reach of the strongest arm of flesh, that if the person here spoken of be but a man, I am sure it requires the wit of more than a man to make sense of the prophecy. Who that great person therefore was, here so magnificently set forth by the prophet, is the thing now to be inquired into. In which inquiry we shall find several opinions, and every one of them pretending to give the right interpretation of the place. I shall reduce them all to these two.

First, The opinion of the ancients.

Secondly, The opinion of some later interpreters.

First, As for the ancient interpreters, I may boldly and truly

say, that it was the general sense of all the old Jewish rabbies, that the person intended in this prophecy was the Messias. Take the affirmation of Rabbi Alschech in his comment upon this prophecy, *Rabbini nostri beatæ memoriæ uno ore statuunt juxta receptam traditionem hic de rege Messid sermonem esse*. And though their opinion of the temporal greatness of the Messias might (if any thing) tempt them to draw this prophecy another way, since it declares the low, abject, and oppressed condition of the person here treated of, yet to show that a suffering Messias was no such paradox in the divinity of the ancient Jewish rabbies, it was a constant received speech among them, that dividing all the afflictions of the people of God into three parts, one third was to fall upon the Messias.

And as for the doctors and fathers of the Christian church, they do all with one unanimous breath declare this to be a prophecy of the Messias, and this Messias to be Jesus Christ. And so full are they to this purpose, that Esaias upon the account of this prophecy is styled by some of them *evangelista*, and *Paulus propheticus*. Nor was ever the least intimation given of any other sense of it, till a little before this last century, a new Christianity has endeavoured to get footing in the Christian world.

Second, The other opinion is of the later interpreters, amongst which I account the Jewish, that is, such as have written after a thousand years since Christ's time, whose opinion in this matter will be found to have this eminent property of falsity, that it is very various. For having departed from the old received interpretation, they are noways agreed what they shall substitute in the room of it. Some will have the subject of this prophecy to have been the people of Israel. Some indefinitely any just or righteous person. Some affirm it to have been Josiah; and one among the rest will needs have the person here spoken of to have been the prophet Jeremy. The authors of each of which opinions give us such insipid stories upon this chapter, as are fitter to be ushered in with the grave and solemn preface of "once upon a time," than to be accounted interpretations of the word of God.

He who contends for the prophet Jeremy, is one Rabbi Saadias Haggæon, and he stands alone, not being countenanced by any of his Jewish brethren, till one in the Christian church thought fit to be his second, and out of his zeal, forsooth, to the Christian faith, to wrest one of the strongest arguments out of the hands of the Christian church, which it has fought with against Judaism ever since it was a church. And thus much I shall with confidence (because with evidence) affirm, that if such prophecies may be proved to have had their first and literal completion in the person of any besides Jesus of Nazareth, all arguments proving them to belong to him at a second hand, and by accommodation (as the word is) are but vain and precarious to the Jews,

who will, and indeed upon his hypothesis may reject them as easily as we can allege them, and then convince him who can.

But how can this prophecy be made to agree to Jeremy? With what truth or propriety could he be said to have been "exalted and extolled, and to have been very high; to have been stricken for our transgressions: and to have had the iniquity of us all laid upon him?" How could it be said of him, "Who shall declare his generation?" and that "he should see his seed and prolong his days?" and also that "he should divide the spoil with the mighty?" with the like expressions.

Why yes, says our expositor, "he was exalted and very high," because the Chaldeans had him in admiration, which yet is more than we read of, and thanks to a good invention for it: though it must be confessed, that upon his being drawn out of the dungeon he was something higher and more exalted than he was before. In the next place, "he was stricken for transgression, and had our iniquities laid upon him," because by the sin and injurious dealings of the Jews he was cruelly and unworthily used, as indeed all or most of the prophets were both before and after him. And then for that saying, "Who shall declare his generation?" The meaning of that we are told is, Who shall reckon his years? for he shall live to be very aged; though yet we know no more of his age, but that he prophesied about forty years: whereas some others have prophesied much longer, and particularly Hosea, who prophesied about fourscore. As for the other expression of "seeing his seed, and prolonging his days," that we are taught must signify, that he should see many of his converts in Egypt, where he should live for a long time. Though yet we read not of any one of those converts, nor of any such prolonging his days there, but that it is a constant tradition of antiquity that he died an untimely disastrous death, being knocked on the head in Egypt by his wicked countrymen with a fuller's club. And in the last place, for his "dividing the spoil with the mighty," that we are informed was fulfilled in this, that Nebuzaradan, captain of the Chaldean host, as we find in Jeremy xl. 5, gave him a reward and some victuals (that is to say, a small supply or *modicum* of meat and money for his present support) and so sent him away. A worthy glorious "dividing the spoil" indeed, and much after the same rate that the poor may be said to divide the spoil, when they take their shares of what is given them at rich men's doors.

So then we have here an interpretation, but as for the sense of it, that, for ought I see, must shift for itself. But whether thus to drag and hale words both from sense and context, and then to squeeze whatsoever meaning we please out of them, be not (as I may speak with some change of the prophet's phrase) to draw lies with cords of blasphemy, and nonsense as it were with a cart-rope, let any sober and impartial hearer or reader be

judge. For whatsoever titles the itch of novelty and Socinianism has thought fit to dignify such immortal, incomparable, incomprehensible interpreters with, yet if these interpretations ought to take place, the said prophecies (which all before Grotius* and the aforesaid Rabbi Saadias unanimously fixed in the first sense of them, upon the sole person of the Messiah) might have been actually fulfilled, and consequently the veracity of God in the said prophecies strictly accounted for, though Jesus of Nazareth had never been born. Which being so, would any one have thought the author of the book *De Veritate Religionis Christianæ et de Satisfactione Christi*, could be also the author of such interpretations as these? No age certainly ever produced a mightier man in all sorts of learning than Grotius, nor more happily furnished with all sorts of arms, both offensive and defensive, for the vindication of the Christian faith, had he not in his annotations too frequently turned the edge of them the wrong way.

Well therefore, taking it for manifest, and that upon all the grounds of rational and unforced interpretation, that the person here spoken of was the Messias, and that this Messias could be no other than Jesus of Nazareth, the great Mediator of the second covenant, "very God, and very man," in whom every tittle of this prophecy is most exactly verified, and to whom it does most peculiarly and incommunicably agree: we shall proceed now to take an account of the several parts of the text, in which we have these three things considerable.

I. The suffering itself, "he was stricken."

II. The nature of the suffering, which was penal and expiatory: "he was stricken for transgression:" and,

III. The ground and cause of this suffering, which was God's propriety in and relation to the person for whom Christ was stricken, implied in this word, "my people:" "for the transgression of my people was he stricken." Of each of which in their order: and,

* Having had the opportunity and happiness of a frequent converse with Dr. Pococke, the late Hebrew and Arabic professor to the university of Oxon, and the greatest master certainly of the eastern languages and learning, which this or any other age or nation had bred, I asked him more than once, as I had occasion, what he thought of Grotius's exposition of Isaiah liii., and his application of that prophecy, in the first sense and design of it, to the person of the prophet Jeremy? To which, smiling and shaking his head, he answered, "Why what else can be thought or said of it, but that in this the opinator overruled the annotator, and the man had a mind to indulge his fancy?" This account gave that great man of it, though he was as great in modesty as he was in learning (greater than which none could be) and withal had a particular respect for Grotius, as having been personally acquainted with him. But the truth is, the matter lay deeper than so, for there was a certain party of men whom Grotius had unhappily engaged himself with, who were extremely disgusted at the book *De Satisfactione Christi*, written by him against Socinus, and therefore he was to pacify (or rather satisfy) these men by turning his pen another way in his annotations, which also was the true reason that he never answered Crellius; a shrewd argument, no doubt, to such as shall well consider those matters, that those in the Low Countries, who at that time went by the name of Remonstrants and Arminians, were indeed a great deal more.

I. For *the suffering itself*: "he was stricken." The very word imports violence and invasion from without. It was not a suffering upon the stock of the mere internal weaknesses of nature, which carries the seeds and causes of its dissolution in its own bowels, and so by degrees withers and decays, and at length dies, like a lamp that for want of oil can burn no longer, but like a torch in its full flame beat and ruffled, and at length blown out by the breath of a north wind; so was Christ dealt with in the very prime and vigour of his years, being by main force torn and stricken out of the world. Blows did the work of time, and stripes and spears were instead of age to put a period to his afflicted life. Now, the greatness of his suffering will be made out to us upon these three accounts. 1. Upon the account of the latitude and extent of it. 2. Of the intenseness and sharpness of it: and, 3. Of the person inflicting it.

1. As for the latitude or extent of it. The blow reached every part of his humanity, carrying the grief all over, till by a universal diffusion of itself it entered, according to the psalmist's expression, "like water into his bowels, or like oil into his bones." It spread itself into every part of his body, as if it had been another soul. Nothing was free from suffering that could suffer. Suffering seemed to be his portion, his inheritance, nay, his very property. Even the religion that he came to propagate and establish was a suffering religion, and by the severest method of establishment he gave the first and greatest instance of it in himself. He who would recount every part of Christ that suffered must read a lecture of anatomy. From the crown of the head to the sole of the foot there was nothing but the traces of pain and suffering: "they made long furrows upon his back," says the Psalmist, they did, as it were, tear and plough up his innocent body. In his person we might have seen grief in its height and supremacy, grief triumphant, crowned and arrayed in purple, grief reigning and doing the utmost that it was able. It is a subject too well known, and too frequently discoursed of, to make descriptions of the thorns, the spears, and the nails, that acted their several parts in this tragedy, and that so that the very narrative of our Saviour's passion cannot but beget another in every pious hearer of it. But when we have said the utmost of his bodily sufferings, we still know that nature has provided a support able to make and stand up against all these; for the strength and firmness of a resolved mind will bear a man above his infirmity, as the breath bears up the body from sinking: but when the supporter itself fails, when the *primum vivens* and the *ultimum moriens* has had a mortal blow, and the iron enters into the very soul, the baffled nature must surrender and quit the combat, unless seconded and held up by something greater and mightier than itself. And this was our Saviour's condition. There was a sword which reached his very spirit, and pierced his

soul, till it bled through his body, for they were the struggles and agonies of the inward man, the labours and strivings of his restless thoughts, which cast his body into that prodigious sweat. For though it was the flesh that sweated, it was the spirit that took the pains. It was that which was then "treading the wine-press of God's wrath alone," till it made him red in his apparel, and dyed all his garments with blood. What thought can reach, or tongue express, what our Saviour then felt within his own breast! The image of all the sins of the world, for which he was to suffer, then appeared clear, and lively, and express to his mind. All the vile and horrid circumstances of them stood, as it were, particularly ranged before his eyes in all their dismal colours. He saw how much the honour of the great God was abused by them, and how many millions of poor souls they must inevitably have cast under the pressures of a wrath infinite and intolerable, should he not have turned the blow upon himself. The horror of which then filled and amazed his vast apprehensive soul, and those apprehensions could not but affect his tender heart, then brimful of the highest zeal for God's glory and the most relenting compassion for the souls of men, till it fermented and boiled over with transport and agony, and even forced its way through all his body in those strange ebullitions of blood, not to be paralleled by the sufferings of any person recorded in any history whatsoever. It was this which drew those doleful words from him, "my soul is exceeding sorrowful," &c., *περίλυπός ἐστιν ἡ ψυχὴ μου*. It was surrounded, and, as it were, besieged, with an army of sorrows. And believe it, his soul was too big and of too strong a make to bend under an ordinary sorrow. It was not any of those little things which make us put the finger in the eye, as loss of estate, friends, preferment, interest, and the like, things too mean to raise a tumult in the breast of a resolved Stoic, and much less in his, who both placed and preached happiness, not only in the want, but in the very defiance of them.

And now after this his agony in the garden, I need not much insist upon the wounds given his reputation by the sword of a blaspheming tongue, the sharpest of all others, and which, like a poisoned dagger, hurting both with edge and venom too, at the same time both makes a wound and prevents its cure. Even a guilty person feels the sting of a malicious report, and if so, much more must one who is innocent, and yet infinitely more must he, who was not only innocent, but innocence itself. Reputation is tender, and for it to be blown upon is to be tainted; like a glass, the clearer and finer it is, the more it suffers by the least breath. And therefore for him who came to destroy the kingdom of Satan, to be traduced as a partner with and an agent for Beelzebub: for him whose greatest repasts were prayer and abstinence, and the most rigid severities upon himself, to be taxed as a wine-bibber and good fellow: for him who

came into the world, both in life and death to bear witness to the truth, to suffer as an impostor and a deceiver; what could be more grievous and afflicting to a great innocence, joined with as great an apprehension!

However, his church gains this great advantage of comfort by it, that the worst of sufferings comes sanctified to our hands by the person of our grand example, who was reviled and slandered, and tossed upon the tongues of men before us. A greater martyrdom questionless than to be cast, as the primitive Christians were, to the mouths of lions, which are tender and merciful compared to the mouths of men; whether we look upon that bitter spirit which acted in those Jews, or in some Christians now-a-days worse than Jews: men who seem to have outdone all before them in the arts of a more refined malice and improved calumny. Qualities lately sprung up out of the stock of a spreading atheism, and domineering, reigning sensuality; sins now made national and authentic, and so much both judgment and mercy-proof, that it is well if we can be cured without being cut off. But to return to the business before us. We have now seen the first thing, setting forth the greatness of this suffering, to wit, the latitude and extent of it; as that it seized body and soul, and every part and faculty of both.

2. The next thing declaring its greatness was *the intenseness and sharpness of it*. We have seen already how far it went, we are now to consider how deep. It fell not on him like a dew or mist, which only wets the surface of the ground, but like a pouring, soaking rain, which descends into the very bowels of it. There was pain enough in every single part to have been spread in lesser proportions over the whole man. Christ suffered only the exquisiteness and heights of pain, without any of those mitigations which God is pleased to temper and allay it with as it befalls other men; like a man who drinks only the spirits of a liquor, separated and extracted from the dull unactive body of the liquor itself. All the force and activity, the stings and fierceness of that troublesome thing were, as it were, drained, distilled, and abridged, into that cup which Christ drank of. There was something sharper than vinegar, and bitterer than gall, which that draught was prepared and made up with. We cannot indeed say that the sufferings of Christ were long in duration, for to be violent and lasting too is above the methods or measures of nature. But he who lived at that rate, that he might be said to live an age every hour, was able to suffer so too; and to comprise the greatest torment in the shortest space; which yet by their shortness lost nothing of their force and keenness; as a penknife is as sharp as a spear, though not so long. That which promotes and adds to the impressions of pain, is the delicate and exact crasis and constitution of the part or faculty aggrieved. And there is no doubt but the very fabric

and complexion of our Saviour's body was a master-piece of nature, a thing absolutely and exactly framed, and of that fineness as to have the quickest and most sensible touches of every object; and withal to have these advanced by the communion of his admirably made body, with his high and vigorous intellectuals. All which made him drink in pain more deeply, feel every lash, every wound, with so much a closer and a more affecting sense. For it is not to be doubted, but a dull fellow can endure the paroxysms of a fever, or the torments of the gout or stone, much better than a man of a quick mind and an exalted fancy: because in one pain beats upon a rock or an anvil, in the other it prints itself upon wax. One is even born with a kind of lethargy and stupefaction into the world, armed with an iron body and a leaden soul against all the apprehensions of ordinary sorrow; so that there is need of some pain to awaken such a one, and to convince him that he is alive; but our Saviour, who had an understanding too quick to let any thing that was intelligible escape it, took in the dolorous afflicting object in its full dimensions. He saw the utmost evil of every one of those strokes, which the guilt of our sins inflicted on him; and what his eye saw his heart proportionably felt: for surely they must needs have been inconceivably afflicting in the actual endurance, which were so dreadful in their very approach, that the horror of them put the man of God's right hand, the man made strong for that very purpose, to start back and decline the blow, could the avoidance of it have stood with the decrees of heaven. "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" which yet was not the voice of cowardice, but of human nature; nature, which by its first and most essential principle would have saved itself, might it have consisted with the saving of the world.

3. The third thing setting forth the greatness of this suffering, is the cause and author of it, which was God himself. The measure of every passion is the operation of the agent. And then, we know what omnipotence can do; omnipotence employed or rather inflamed by justice, in whose quarrel it was then engaged. We must not measure the divine strokes by the proportion of those blows which are inflicted by the greatest and most exasperated mortal; the condition of whose nature sets bounds to his power, when it cannot to his rage: so that, in the utmost executions of it, he acts but like a wasp; very angrily indeed, but very weakly. Every blow inflicted by the fiercest tyrant can reach no further than the body; and the body is but the dwelling-place, not any part of the soul; and consequently can no more communicate its ruins to that, than a man can be said to be wounded in his person, because a wall of his house was broken down. Upon which account there have been some, whose souls have been so fortified with philosophy and great principles

as to enable them to laugh in Phalaris's bull, to sing upon the rack, and to despise the flames. For still, when God torments us by the instrumental mediation of the creature, his anger can fall upon us in no greater proportions than what can pass through the narrow capacities of a created being. For be the fountain never so full, yet if it communicates itself by a little pipe, the stream can be but small and inconsiderable, and equal to the measures of the conveyance. God can no more give his power, than his glory to another; there is no mortal arm can draw his bow: God cannot thunder or lighten by proxy. He alone is the father of spirits, and none can reach the conscience but he who made it: and therefore being to discharge the utmost of his vindictive justice upon the sins of mankind then charged upon our Saviour, he took the sword into his own hand, entered the lists, and dealt with him immediately by himself. And then we find the difference of our Saviour's suffering by the difference of his behaviour. While he was buffeted, scourged, and nailed to the cross, we hear nothing from him, but "like a lamb before the shearers he was dumb:" not because he could not, but because he scorned to roar under the impressions of a finite anger. But when God reached forth his hand, and darted his immediate rebukes into his very soul and spirit, as he did while he was hanging upon the cross, then he cries out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" Silence upon such a loss would have been but stupidity, and patience an absurdity; for when God withdrew his presence from him, that darkness which then covered the face of the whole earth, was but a faint emblem of that blacker cloud of despair which had overcast his soul. It is not possible for us to conceive the utmost weight of those heavy strokes inflicted by the Almighty himself upon our Saviour. All the representations and little draughts of them made by words and fancy are vastly short of the keen impressions of sense. But yet that which gives us the nearest resemblance of them, surely, is the torment of a guilty mind under a state of desertion; when God shall turn the worm of conscience into a scorpion, and smite it with the secret invisible stings of his wrath, such as shall fester and rage inwardly, gnaw and rake the very entrails of the soul. The burden and anguish of this has been sometimes so insupportable, that some have professed themselves to envy the condition of Judas and the damned spirits, as thinking the endurance of those flames more tolerable than the expectation, and accordingly have done violence to their own lives, and so fled to hell as to a sanctuary, and chosen damnation as a release. Far were such persons, God knows, from bettering their condition by completing that which they could not bear in the very beginnings and foretastes of it; yet, however, it demonstrates to us the unspeakable wretchedness of a guilty soul, labouring under the hand of God. And by the way, let the boldest, the hardest, and

the securest sinner know that God is able, without ever touching him either in his estate, his health, his reputation, or any other outward enjoyment dear to him, but merely by letting a few drops of his wrath fall upon his guilty conscience, so to scald and gall him with a lively sense of sin, that he shall live a continual terror to himself, carry about him a hell in his own breast, which shall echo to him such peals of vengeance every hour, that all the wine and music, all the honours and greatness of the world shall not be able to minister the least ease to his heart-sick and desponding soul. Now in these torments of a guilty conscience we have some little image of the pains then suffered by our Saviour, the greatness of both being founded upon the same reason; namely, that God is the sole and immediate infliker of such strokes: and then surely the suffering must needs be grievous, when infinite justice passes sentence, and infinite power does execution.

And thus I have finished the first general thing proposed from the text, which was the suffering itself, expressed in these words, "he was stricken," and that by considering the latitude, the intenseness, and also the cause of it: all of them so many arguments to demonstrate to us its unparalleled greatness.

II. The second general thing proposed was *the nature and quality of this suffering*; namely, that it was penal and expiatory, "he was stricken for our transgression." And to prove that it was penal, there needs no other argument to any clear, unbiassed understanding than the natural, genuine, and unconstrained use of the word: for what other sense can there be of a man's being stricken or suffering for sin, but his being punished for sin? and that I am sure is spoken so plain and loud by the universal voice of the whole book of God, that scripture must be crucified as well as Christ, to give any other tolerable sense of it. But since heresy has made such bold invasions upon those sacred writings, we will consider both those senses which these words are asserted to be capable of.

1. First of all then, some assert, that to be stricken for transgression imports not here a punishment for sins past, but a prevention or taking away of sin for the future. So that Christ is said to be stricken, to suffer and to die for sin, because by all this he confirmed to us an excellent and holy doctrine, the belief of which has in it a natural aptness to draw men off from their sins. In a word, because Christianity tends to make men holy and cease from sin, and because Christ by his blood sealed the truth of Christianity, therefore he is said to die for sin; a strange and remote deduction, and such a one as the common rules and use of speaking would never have suggested. But then besides, because it is easy to come upon the authors of this perverse interpretation, by demanding of them what fitness there could be in Christ's

death to confirm his doctrine; and what reason the world could have to believe Christianity true, because the author of it, a pious, innocent, excellent person, was basely and cruelly put to death: therefore they further say, that this effect of its confirmation is really and indeed to be ascribed to his subsequent resurrection, though only his death be still mentioned: that being the most difficult and heroic passage of all that he either did or suffered for our sakes, and consequently the greatest instance of his patience, and persuasion of the truth of that doctrine for which he suffered. But by their favour, if Christ is said no otherwise to die for sin, than because he delivered a doctrine, the design of which it was to draw men off from sin, and which was confirmed to be true only by his resurrection; how comes it to pass that this effect is still joined with his death, but never with his resurrection? it being said over and over, that he died for sin, suffered and bled for sin, but never that he rose again for sin. It is, indeed, said once that he "rose again for our justification:" but in the very foregoing words it is said, that he was "delivered to death for our offences:" which shows that those words "for our offences," and "for our justification," have there a very different sense, and bear a different relation to the words with which they are joined, in that, as well as in the other scriptures. But this whole invention is so forced and far fetched, and so much out of the road of common reason, that it is impossible it should gain, but by the strengths and prepossessions of prejudice; and where prejudice stands for judgment, for ought I see, it is as vain to urge arguments as to quote scriptures.

2. The other sense of these words, and which alone the catholic church receives for true, is, that Christ's being "stricken for sin," signifies his being punished for sin. The word *for* in this case denoting the antecedent meritorious cause of his suffering, and not the final, as the school of Socinus does assert; and consequently must directly relate to the removal of the guilt of sin, and not the power, as it is also affirmed by the same persons. Now that Christ's suffering and being "stricken for transgression" imports that suffering to have been penal and expiatory, as it might with the highest evidence be demonstrated from several scriptures: so at this time I shall confine myself within the limits of the chapter from whence I took my text; and here I shall found the proof of it upon these two expressions.

First, That Christ is said to have "borne our sins," in the twelfth verse. Now *to bear sin* is a Hebrew phrase for that which in Latin is *luere peccatum*, and in English, to be punished for sin. And if to bear another man's sin or iniquity by suffering does not imply the undergoing of the punishment due to that man's sin; we must invent a new way of expounding profane writers as well as sacred, and interpreting the common speeches of men, as well as the word of God.

Secondly, The other argument shall be taken from that expression which declares Christ to have been made a sacrifice or an offering for sin, in the tenth verse: "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." The proof of what I here affirm is grounded upon the use and design of a sacrifice, as it has been used by all nations in the world; which was to appease the Deity by paying down a life for sin; and that by the substitution of a sacrifice, whether of man or beast, to die and pay down his life instead of the sinner. For there was a tacit acknowledgment universally fixed in the hearts of all mankind, that "the wages of sin was death," and that "without shedding of blood there could be no remission:" upon which was built the reason of all their sacrifices and victims. So surely therefore as Christ was a sacrifice, and as the design of a sacrifice is to pay down a life for sin, and as to pay down a life for sin is to be punished for sin; so sure it is, that Christ's death and sufferings were penal. Now it being clear that the foundation of all punishment is compensation or exchange; that is to say, something paid down to divine justice for something done against it: and since all compensation implies a retribution equivalent to the injury done, therefore, that Christ might be qualified to be a sacrifice fit to undergo the full punishment due for sins of mankind two things were required.

(1.) An infinite dignity in his person; for since the evil and demerit of sin was infinite: and since Christ was so to suffer for it, as not to remain under those sufferings for an infinite duration; that infinity therefore was to be made up some other way; which could not be, but by the infinite worth and dignity of his person, grasping in all the perfections and glories of the Deity, and by consequence deriving an infinite value to his sufferings.

(2.) The other qualification required was a perfect innocence in the person to suffer: for so much was specified by the paschal lamb, of which we still read in scripture, that it was to be "a lamb without blemish." And there is no doubt, but had Christ had any sin of his own to have satisfied for, he had been very unable to satisfy for other men's. He who is going to gaol for his own debts, is very unfit to be security for another's.

But now this perfect innocence, which I affirm necessary to render Christ a fit and proper sacrifice, is urged by our adversaries to be the very reason why Christ's sufferings could not be penal; since punishment in the very nature and essence of it imports a relation to sin. To this I answer, that punishment does indeed import an essential relation to sin; but not of necessity to the sin of the person upon whom it is inflicted; as might be evinced by innumerable instances as well as undeniable reasons.

If it be replied, that God has declared that "the soul that sins shall die." I answer, that this is only a positive law, according to which God declares he will proceed in the ordinary course of his

providence; but it is not of natural and eternal obligation, so as universally to bind God in all cases; but that he may when he pleases deal otherwise with his creature. But this will receive further light from the discussion of the third and last general head, to which we now proceed. Namely,

III. *The ground and cause of this suffering*, which was God's propriety in, and relation to, the persons for whom Christ suffered, specified in these words, "my people:" "For the transgression of my people was he stricken."

If it be here asked, upon what account the persons here spoken of were denominated and made God's people? I answer, that they were so by an eternal covenant and transaction between the Father and the Son; by which the Father, upon certain conditions to be performed by the Son, consigned over some persons to him to be his people. For our better understanding of which we are to observe, that the business of man's redemption proceeds upon a two-fold covenant.

First, An eternal covenant made between the Father and the Son, by which the Father agreed to give both grace and glory to a certain number of sinners, upon condition that Christ would assume their nature, and pay down such a ransom to his justice, as should both satisfy for their sin, and withal merit such a measure of grace as should effectually work in them all things necessary to their salvation. And this covenant may be properly called a covenant of suretyship or redemption. Upon which alone, and not upon any covenant made between God and man in their own persons, is built the infallibility of the future believing, repenting, and finally persevering, of such as Christ from all eternity undertook to make his people.

Secondly, The other is a covenant made in time, and actually entered into by God and man, by which God on his part promises to men eternal salvation, upon condition of faith and repentance on theirs. And this is called in scripture the second covenant, or the covenant of grace, and stands opposed to that which is there called the first covenant, or the covenant of works.

Now by that eternal compact or transaction between the Father and the Son, of which alone we now speak, was this donation of a certain determinate number of persons made to Christ to be his people, by virtue of which agreement or transaction he was in the fulness of time to suffer for them, and to accomplish the whole work of their redemption from first to last. For to affirm that Christ died only to verify a proposition, [That whosoever believed should be saved,] but in the mean time to leave the whole issue of things in reference to persons so loose and undetermined, that it was a question whether ever any one should actually believe, and very possible that none ever might, and consequently that after Christ had suffered, had been stricken, and

died for transgression, yet for any thing that he had done in all this, he might never have had a people; this certainly is a strange and new gospel, and such as the doctrine of our church seems utterly unacquainted with.

Having thus shown the foundation upon which the persons here spoken of are called by the prophet God's people, namely, an eternal covenant, in which God the Father and the Son mutually agreed upon the terms of their redemption, we are now to observe, that the same thing that thus denominates and makes them God's people, makes them under the same relation to belong also to Christ, and that not only upon the account of his nature that he was God, but chiefly of his office, that he was their mediator; which capacity made him equally concerned in that eternal covenant, he accepting and agreeing to those terms that were proposed and offered him by the Father. By his acceptance of which he became both a mystical head and a surety to those for whom he so undertook. And this relation of his to them was the cause why he both might be and actually was "stricken by God for their transgression," without any violation of the divine justice, notwithstanding the perfect innocence of his person. For to render it just to inflict a punishment upon an innocent person instead of another, either of these two causes are sufficient.

First, An intimate conjunction between those persons, and that either natural, as between father and son, or political, as between king and people, and the like: or,

Secondly, The voluntary consent and will of an innocent person to undergo the punishment due to the nocent, as it is between a man and his surety.

Accordingly, from that covenant by which the Father made over a certain number of persons to the Son to be his people, there arose this twofold relation of Christ to them.

1. Of a king to his people, or of a mystical head to his members; so that legally and politically they suffered as really in Christ, as the whole body suffers when the head is wounded or struck through with a dart.

2. The other relation is of a surety; so that the satisfaction paid down by Christ to God's justice for sin, is, in estimation of law, as really accounted to be paid down by the saints, as if they had paid it in their persons.

And this is a further, and withal a full answer to that objection formerly hinted from the innocence of Christ's person, as if it rendered him incapable of punishment. For his own free voluntary consent to be a surety for sinners, and responsible for all that divine justice could charge them with, transferred the guilt and obligation from their person to his own.

In a word, the compact between Christ and his Father made him a king, a mystical head, and also a surety to some certain

persons; and his being so, made them his people, and their being his people, did, upon that account, make it both just and equitable for him to suffer, and to be "stricken for their transgression;" which is the result of the text, and the thing undertaken by us to be proved.

I have now finished the several things proposed from the text, in which having set before you how much Christ has suffered, and all for our sakes, I hope it will kindle the workings of a pious ingenuity in every one of our breasts. For I am sure if Christ's suffering for us were the doctrine, gratitude should make our readiness to suffer for him the application. Christianity I show was a suffering religion, and there are two sorts of suffering to which it will certainly expose every genuine professor of it. 1. The first is from himself. 2. The second from the world.

1. And first, it will engage him in a suffering from himself, even that grand suffering of self-denial and mortification, the sharpest and most indispensable of all others, in which every Christian is not only to be the sufferer, but himself also the executioner. "He who is Christ's," says the apostle, "has crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts." A severe discipline certainly, in which a man is to act his fiercest anger upon his dearest friends. For could nature ever yet suggest to any one the hatred of his own flesh, the crucifixion of his desires, and the stabbing of his most beloved affections? Nature indeed cannot, will not prompt it, but Christianity, which rises many strains above nature, both must and will. The best sacrifice to a crucified Saviour is a crucified lust, a bleeding heart, and a dying corruption. We cannot bring, nor indeed does Christ expect a recompence for what he has suffered for us: yet that which he will accept, as if it were a recompence, is for us to deal cruelly with that body of sin which has caused the acting of all those cruelties upon him. Let the ambitious man lay his pride in the dust, the covetous man deposit his treasures in the banks of charity and liberality, and let the voluptuous epicure renounce his cups and his whores, and this will be a present to heaven better than a whole hecatomb; nor could the fruit of his body fall so grateful a sacrifice upon God's altar as the sin of his soul. But it is like the jolly world about us will scoff at the paradox of such practices, and explode them as madness and melancholy; yet let those sons of pleasure know, that such as scorn to be thus melancholy in this world, will have but little cause to be merry in the next.

2. The other kind of suffering in which Christianity will engage a man, is from the world. Such is the genius and nature of the Christian religion, that it must unavoidably bring him who owns it, in the power of it, under temporal troubles and afflictions. "In the world," says Christ, "ye shall have tribulation." And he spoke it not so much by a spirit of prophecy as philo-

sophy, and by an actual sight of it in its pregnant causes. For the contrariety of the principles and maxims of Christianity to those of the world, cannot but engage men in such practices as shall also thwart the customs and modes which govern the actions of the world. But where there is contrariety there will be fighting, the weaker, I am sure, must suffer; and generally the Christian's is so in all worldly encounters, whose chief defensatives lie not in that armour that is sword-proof or bullet-proof, and who wears no breast-plate upon, but within his breast, that is, his innocence, his conscience, and his confidence in a reconciled God. Suffering is a thing which all men abhor, and that because they are ashamed of it; and their being so is grounded upon this opinion, that to suffer, in the very nature of it, seems to impeach the suffering person, either in the reputation of his power or of his innocence, that is, he suffers, either because he is weak, and cannot hinder it, or because he is faulty, and so deserves it. But with every Christian, Christ is an abundant answer to both these objections. For when we see omnipotence hanging upon the cross, and God himself scourged and spit upon; and when we see him who could have commanded fire from heaven, and legions of angels to his rescue, yet surrendering himself quietly to the will of his murderers, surely no mortal man, who is but dirt and worms' meat at the best, can pretend himself too great and too high to suffer. And again, when we behold virtue, innocence, and purity, more than angelical, crucified between thieves and malefactors, shall any man whose birth and actions revile and speak him a sinner to his face, think himself too good to come under the cross, and to take his share in the common lot of Christianity? It is not the suffering itself, but the cause of it, that is dishonourable. And even in the worst and most shameful of sufferings, though the hangman does the execution, yet it is the crime alone which does the disgrace.

Christ commands us nothing, but he enforces it with arguments from his person as well as from his word, and it is well if we can make a due use of them. For God knows how soon he may call us from our easy speculations and theories of suffering to the practical experience of it: how soon he may draw us forth for persecution and the fiery trial. Only this we may be sure of, that if these things be brought upon us for his honour, it will be for ours to endure them. And be our distresses never so great, our calamities never so strange and unusual, yet we have both our Saviour's example to direct, and his promise to support us, who has left it upon record in his everlasting gospel, that "if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him."

To whom, therefore, be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON II.

ON THE RESURRECTION.

[Preached on Easter Day, 1667.]

ACTS II. 24.

Ὁν ὁ Θεὸς ἀνέστησε, λύσας τὰς ῥάνας τοῦ θανάτου, καθότι οὐκ ἦν δυνατόν κρατεῖσθαι αὐτὸν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ.

Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

It is of infinite concern to mankind, both as to their welfare in this world and the next, to preserve in their minds a full belief of a future estate of happiness or misery, into which, according to the quality of their actions here, they must for ever be disposed of hereafter, the experience of all ages having found the insufficiency of bare human restraints to control the audacious sinfulness of some tempers and dispositions, without holding them under the awe of this persuasion. From which, though some by much and long sinning, and perverse ratiocinations caused thereby, have in a great measure disentangled their consciences, yet these are but few and inconsiderable compared with the rest of the world, in whose minds education and better principles, grafted upon the very instincts of nature, have fixed this persuasion too deep to be ever totally rooted out. And it is from the victorious influence of this, that the common peace of the world has been maintained against those bold invasions which the corruption of man's nature would otherwise continually make upon it. But now as highly necessary as it is for men to believe such a future estate, yet it must be acknowledged, that with the generality of the world this belief has stood hitherto upon very false, or at the best very weak foundations, and consequently that it is of no small import to state and settle it upon better. For the doing of which the most effectual ways, I conceive, may be these two. 1. By revelation. 2. By exemplification.

1. As to the first whereof, it must needs be either by an immediate declaration of this great truth (not discoverable by reason) by a voice from heaven, or by God's inspiring some certain select persons with the knowledge of it, and afterwards enabling them to attest it to the world by miracles. And as this is undoubtedly sufficient in itself for such a purpose, so Providence has not been wanting, partly by revelation, and partly by

tradition thereupon, to keep alive among men some persuasion at least of this important truth all along, as appears even from those fabulous accounts and stories which the heathen world still clothed or rather corrupted it with. Nevertheless such has been the prevalence of human corruption and infidelity, as in a great degree to frustrate all the impressions that bare revelation or tradition could make upon men's minds, while they chiefly governed their belief by the observation of their senses, which, from the daily occurring instances of mortality, show them, that "as the tree fell so it lay:" and that nobody was ever seen by them to return from the mansions of the dead, but that, for any thing they could find to the contrary, all passed into dust and rottenness, and perpetual oblivion.

2. The other ways, therefore, of convincing the world of this momentous truth (in comparison of which all science and philosophy are but trifles) must be by exemplification; that is to say, by giving the world an instance or example of it in some person or persons, who having been confessedly dead, should revive, and return to life again. And this, one would think, should be as full and unexceptionable a proof that there may be a resurrection of men to a future estate as could be desired, nothing striking the mind of man so powerfully as instances and examples, which make a truth not only intelligible, but even palpable, sliding it into the understanding through the windows of sense, and by the most familiar as well as most unquestionable perceptions of the eye. And accordingly this course God thought fit to take in the resurrection of Christ, by which he condescended to give the world the greatest satisfaction that infidelity itself could rationally insist upon: howbeit, notwithstanding so plain an address both to men's reason and sense too, neither has this course proved so successful for convincing of the world of a resurrection from the dead, and a future estate consequent thereupon, but that unbelief has been still putting in its objections against it. For it is not, I confess, the interest of such as live ill in this world to believe that there shall be another, or that they shall be sensible of any thing after death has once done its work upon them: and therefore let truth and scripture, and even sense itself, say what they will for a resurrection, men, for ought appears, will for ever square their belief to their desires, and their desires to their corruptions; so that, as we find it in St. Luke, xvi. 31, "Though they should even see one rise from the dead they would hardly be persuaded of their own resurrection." Such a sad and deplorable hardihood of heart have men sinned themselves into, that nothing shall convince them but what first pleased them, be it never so much a delusion. Nevertheless the most wise and just God is not so to be mocked, who knows, that by raising Christ from the dead he has done all that rationally can or ought to be done for the convincing of mankind that there shall be a resur-

rection, whether they will be convinced by it or no. But now if after all it should be asked, How is Christ's resurrection a proof that the rest of mankind shall rise from the dead too? I answer, that considered indeed as a bare instance or example, it proves no more than that there may be such a thing, since the same infinite power which effected the one may as well effect the other; but then if we consider it as an argument and a confirmation of that doctrine whereof the assertion of a general resurrection makes a principal part, I affirm that so taken it does not only prove that such a thing may be, but also that it actually shall be, and that as certainly as it is impossible for the divine power to set a seal to a lie, by ratifying an imposture with such a miracle. And thus as Christ's resurrection irrefragably proves the resurrection of the rest of mankind, so it no less proves Christ himself to have been the Messiah, for that having all along affirmed himself to be so, he made good the truth of what he had so affirmed by his miraculous rising again, and so gave as strong a proof of his Messiahship, as infinite power, joined with equal veracity, could give. And upon this account we have his resurrection alleged by St. Peter for the same purpose here in the text, which was part of his sermon to the Jews concerning Jesus Christ, whom he proves to be their true and long expected Messiah, against all the cavils of prejudice and unbelief, by this oneincible demonstration.

In the text then we have these three things considerable.

I. Christ's resurrection, and the cause of it, in these words, "whom God hath raised up."

II. The manner by which it was effected, which was by "loosing the pains of death." And,

III. And lastly, The ground of it, which was its absolute necessity, expressed in these words, "it was not possible that he should be holden of it." And,

1. For the first of these, *the cause of the resurrection*, set forth in this expression, "whom God hath raised up." It was such an action as proclaimed an omnipotent agent, and carried the hand of God writ upon it in broad characters, legible to the meanest reason. Death is a disease which art cannot cure: and the grave a prison which delivers back its captives upon no human summons. To restore life is only the prerogative of him who gives it. Some indeed have pretended by art and physical applications to recover the dead, but the success has sufficiently upbraided the attempt: physic may repair and piece up nature, but not create it. Cordials, plasters, and fomentations cannot always stay a life when it is going, much less can they remand it when it is gone. Neither is it in the power of a spirit or demon, good or bad, to inspire a new life: for it is a creation, and to create is the incommunicable prerogative of a power infinite and unlimited.

Enter into a body they may, and so act and move it after the manner of a soul; but it is one thing to move, another to animate a carcase. You see the devil could fetch up nothing of Samuel at the request of Saul, but a shadow and a resemblance, his countenance and his mantle, which yet was not enough to cover the cheat or to palliate the illusion. But I suppose nobody will be very importunate for any further proof of this, that if Christ was raised, it must be by God who raised him. The angel might indeed roll away the stone from the sepulchre, but not turn it into a son of Abraham; and a less power than that which could do so, could not effect the resurrection.

II. I come now to the second thing, which is to show *the manner by which God wrought this resurrection*, set forth in these words, "having loosed the pains of death." An expression not altogether so clear, but that it may well require a further explanation. For it may be required, with what propriety God could be said to "loose the pains of death," by Christ's resurrection, when those pains continued not till the resurrection, but determined and expired in the death of his body? Upon which ground it is, that some have affirmed, That Christ descended into the place of the damned; where during his body's abode in the grave, they say, that in his soul he really suffered the pains of hell; and this not unsuitably to some ancient copies, which read it not *ἡδυνας θανάτου*, "the pains of death," but *ἡδυνας ᾗδου*, "the pains of hell;" and this also with much seeming consonance to that article of the creed in which Christ is said to have "descended into hell." But to this I answer, That Christ suffered not any such pains in hell as the forementioned opinion would pretend, which we may demonstrate from this, that if Christ suffered any of those pains during his abode in the grave, then it was either in his divine nature, or in his soul, or in his body. But the divine nature could not suffer or be tormented, as being wholly impassible: nor yet could he suffer in his soul; forasmuch as in the very same day of his death that passed into paradise, which surely is no place of pain: nor lastly, in his body, for that being dead, and consequently for the time bereaved of all sense, could not be capable of any torment. And then, for answer to what was alleged from the ancient copies, it is to be observed, that the word *ᾗδου* (which some render hell) indifferently signifies also the grave, and a state of death. And lastly, for that article of the creed in which there is mention made of Christ's descent into hell, there are various expositions of it, but the most rational and agreeable is, that it means his abode in the grave and under the state of death three days and three nights, or rather three *νυχθήμερα*, viz. part of the first and third (so called by a synecdoche of the part for the whole) and the second entirely: whereby as his burial signified his entrance into the

grave; so his descending into hell signified his continuance there and subjection to that estate. And thus the three parts of his humiliation in the last and grand scene of it, do most appositely answer to three parts of his exaltation. For first, his death answers to his rising again. Secondly, his burial answers to his ascending into heaven. And thirdly, his descending into hell, answers to his sitting at the right hand of God, in a state of never-dying glory, honour, and immortality. But however, that his descending into hell mentioned in the creed cannot signify his local descent into the place of the damned, the former argument disproving his suffering the pains of hell, will by an easy change of the terms sufficiently evince this also. For first, Christ could not descend according to his divine nature; since that which is infinite and fills all places could not acquire any new place. And as for his soul, that was in paradise, and his body was laid in the grave; and being so, what part of Christ could descend into hell (the whole Christ being thus disposed of) needs a more than ordinary apprehension to conceive.

We are therefore in the next place to see, how we can make out the reason of this expression upon some other or better ground. In order to which, it is very observable, that the same word which in the Greek text is rendered by *ᾠδύνας*, and in the English by "pains," in the Hebrew signifies not only pain, but also a cord or band;* according to which it is very easy and proper to conceive that the resurrection discharged Christ from the bands of death: besides that this rendition of the word seems also most naturally to agree with the genuine meaning of some other words in the same verse; as of *λύσας*, "having loosed," which is properly applicable to bands and not to pains; as also of *κρατείσθαι*, which signifies properly to be bound with some cord or band: so that undoubtedly this exposition would give the whole verse a much more natural and apposite construction, and withal remove the difficulty. But

Secondly, Because the Evangelist St. Luke follows the translation of the Septuagint (who little minding the Hebrew pointings, rendered the word *חבלי* not by *σχοινία*, cords or bands, but *ᾠδύνας*, pains), we are therefore not to balk so great an authority, but to see how the scheme of the text may be made clear, and agreeable even to this exposition.

To this therefore I answer,

1. That the words contain in them a Hebraism, viz. *the pains of death*, for a *painful death*; as it is said, Matt. xxiv. 15, *the abomination of desolation*, for an *abominable desolation*; and so the resurrection loosed Christ from a painful death, not indeed *painful in sensu composito*, as if it were so at the time of his release from it, but in a divided sense (as the logicians speak), it loosed

* See Dr. Hammond's Annot. on the place.

him from a continuance under that death; which, relating to the time of his suffering it, was so painful.

2. But secondly, I answer further, that though the pains of death ceased long before the resurrection, so that this could not in strictness of sense be said to remove them; yet, taken in a metonymy of the cause for the effect, the pains of death might be properly said to have been loosed in the resurrection, because that estate of death into which Christ was brought by those foregoing pains was then conquered and completely triumphed over. Captivity under death and the grave was the effect and consequent of those pains, and therefore the same deliverance which discharged Christ from the one, might not improperly be said to loose him from the other. And thus Christ was no sooner bound, but within a little time he was loosed again. He was not so much buried, as for a while deposited in the grave for a small inconsiderable space: so that even in this respect he may not inelegantly be said to have "tasted of death;" for a taste is transient, short, and quickly past. God rescued him from that estate, as "a prey from the mighty," and "a captive from the strong:" and though he was in the very jaws of death, yet he was not devoured. Corruption, the common lot of mortality, seized not on him; worms and putrefaction durst not approach him: his body was sacred and inviolable; as sweet under ground as above it, and in death itself retaining one of the highest privileges of the living.

III. Come we now to the last and principal thing proposed; namely, *the ground of Christ's resurrection*, which was its absolute necessity, expressed in these words, "because it was not possible that he should be holden of it:" and that according to the strictest and most received sense of the word *possible*. For it was not only *par et æquum*, that Christ should not always be detained under death, because of his innocence (as Grotius precariously, and to serve any hypothesis, would have the word *δυνατόν* here signify), but it was absolutely necessary that he should not, and impossible that he should continue under the bands of death, from the peculiar condition of his person, as well as upon several other accounts. And accordingly this impossibility was founded upon these five things.

1. The union of Christ's human nature to the divine.
2. God's immutability.
3. His justice.
4. The necessity of Christ's being believed in.
5. And lastly, the nature of his priesthood.

1. First of all then, the hypostatical union of Christ's human nature to his divine, rendered a perpetual duration under death absolutely impossible. For how could that which was united to the great source and principle of life be finally prevailed over by death, and pass into an estate of perpetual darkness and oblivion?

even while Christ's body was divided from his soul, yet it ceased not to maintain an intimate indissoluble relation to his divinity. It was assumed into the same person; for according to the creed of Athanasius, "as the soul and body make one man; so the divine nature and human make one Christ." And if so, is it imaginable that the Son of God could have one of his natures rent wholly from his person? his divinity, as it were, buoyed up his sinking humanity; and preserved it from a total dissolution: for, as while the soul continues joined to the body (still speaking in *sensu composito*), death cannot pass upon it; forasmuch as that is the proper effect of their separation; so, while Christ's manhood was retained in a personal conjunction with his Godhead, the bands of death were but feeble and insignificant, like the withs and cords upon Samson, while he was inspired with the mighty presence and assistance of God's Spirit.

It was possible, indeed, that the divine nature might for a while suspend its supporting influence, and so deliver over the human nature to pain and death, but it was impossible for it to let go the relation it bore to it. A man may suffer his child to fall to the ground, and yet not wholly quit his hold of him, but still keep it in his power to recover and lift him up at his pleasure. Thus the divine nature of Christ did for a while hide itself from his humanity, but not desert it; put it into the chambers of death, but not lock the everlasting doors upon it. The sun may be clouded and yet not eclipsed, and eclipsed but not stopped in his course, and much less forced out of its orb. It is a mystery to be admired, that any thing belonging to the person of Christ should suffer, but it is a paradox to be exploded, that it should perish. For surely that nature which diffusing itself throughout the universe communicates an enlivening influence to every part of it, and quickens the least spire of grass, according to the measure of its nature, and the proportion of its capacity, would not wholly leave a nature assumed into its bosom, and, what is more, into the very unity of the divine person, breathless and inanimate, and dismantled of its prime and noblest perfection. For life is so high a perfection of being, that in this respect the least fly or mite is a more noble being than a star. And God has expressly declared himself, not the God of the dead, but of the living: and this in respect of the very persons of men; but how much more with reference to what belongs to the person of his Son! For when natures come to unite so near, as mutually to interchange names and attributes, and to verify the appellation by which God is said to be man, and man to be God; surely man so privileged and advanced, cannot for ever lie under death, without an insufferable invasion upon the entireness of that glorious person, whose perfection is as inviolable as it is incomprehensible.

2. The second ground of the impossibility of Christ's con-

tinuance under death, was that great and glorious attribute of God, his immutability. Christ's resurrection was founded upon the same bottom with the consolation and salvation of believers, expressed in that full declaration made by God of himself, Mal. iii. 6, "I the Lord change not: therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed." Now the immutability of God, as it had an influence upon Christ's resurrection, was twofold.

(1.) In respect of his decree or purpose.

(2.) In respect of his word or promise.

(1.) And first for his decree. God had from all eternity designed this, and sealed it by an irreversible purpose. For can we imagine that Christ's resurrection was not decreed, as well as his death and sufferings? and these in the 23d verse of this chapter are expressly said to have been determined by God. It is a known rule in divinity, that whatsoever God does in time, that he purposed to do from eternity; for there can be no new purposes of God; since he who takes up a new purpose does so because he sees some ground to induce him to such a purpose, which he did not see before; but this can have no place in an infinite knowledge, which by one comprehensive intuition sees all things as present, before ever they come to pass: so that there can be no new emergency that can alter the divine resolutions. And therefore it having been absolutely purposed to raise Christ from the dead, his resurrection was as fixed and necessary, as the purpose of God was irrevocable: a purpose which commenced from eternity, and was declared in the very beginnings of time; a purpose not to be changed nor so much as bent, and much less broken, by all the created powers in heaven and earth and in hell besides. For though indeed death is a great conqueror, and his bands much too strong for nature and mortality: yet when over-matched by a decree, this conqueror, as old as he has grown in conquest, must surrender back his spoils, unbind his captives, and in a word, even death itself must receive its doom. From all which it is manifest, that where there is a divine decree, there is always an omnipotence to second it; and consequently, that by the concurrence of both no less a power was employed to raise Christ out of the grave, than that which first raised the world itself out of nothing.

(2.) Let us consider God's immutability in respect of his word and promise, for these also were engaged in this affair. In what a clear prophecy was this foretold and dictated by that Spirit which could not lie, Psalm xvi. 10, "Thou shalt not suffer thy Holy One to see corruption." And Christ also had frequently foretold the same of himself. Now when God says a thing he gives his veracity in pawn to see it fully performed. Heaven or earth may pass away sooner than one iota of a divine promise fall to the ground. Few things are recorded of Christ, but the rear of the narrative is still brought up with this, that such

a thing was done, that it "might be fulfilled what was spoken" by such or such a prophet; such a firm, unshaken, adamantine connection is there between a prophecy and its accomplishment. "All things that are written in the prophets concerning me," says Christ, "must come to pass." And surely then the most illustrious passage that concerned him could not remain under an uncertainty and contingency of event. So that, what is most emphatically said concerning the persevering obstinacy and infidelity of the Jews, John xii. 39, 40, that they could not believe, because that Esaias had said, that "God blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, and so be converted, and he should heal them." The same, I affirm, may with as great an emphasis, and a much greater clearness to our reason, be affirmed of Christ, that therefore death could not hold him, because the kingly prophet had long before sung the triumphs of his glorious resurrection in the forementioned prediction. In a word, whatsoever God purposes or promises, passes from contingent and merely possible into certain and necessary; and whatsoever is necessary, the contrary of it is so far impossible.

But when I say that the divine decree or promise imprints a necessity upon things, it may, to prevent misapprehension, be needful to explain what kind of necessity this is, that so the liberty of second causes be not thereby wholly cashiered and taken away. For this therefore we are to observe, that the schools distinguish of a twofold necessity, physical and logical, or causal and consequential; which terms are commonly thus explained, viz., that physical or causal necessity is when a thing by an efficient productive influence certainly and naturally causes such an effect: and in this sense neither the divine decree nor promise makes things necessary; for neither the decree nor promise by itself produces or effects the thing decreed or promised; nor exerts any active influence upon second causes so as to impel them to do any thing; but in point of action are wholly ineffective. Secondly, logical or consequential necessity is when a thing does not efficiently cause an event, but yet by certain infallible consequence does infer it. Thus the foreknowledge of any event, if it be true and certain, does certainly and necessarily infer that there must be such an event: forasmuch as the certainty of the knowledge depends upon the certainty of the thing known. And in this sense it is, that God's decree and promise give a necessary existence to the thing decreed or promised, that is to say, they infer it by a necessary infallible consequence; so that it was as impossible for Christ not to rise from the dead, as it was for God absolutely to decree and promise a thing, and yet for that thing not to come to pass.

3. The third reason of the impossibility of Christ's detention under a state of death, was from the justice of God. God in

the whole procedure of Christ's sufferings must be considered as a judge exacting, and Christ as a person paying down a recompense or satisfaction for sin. For though Christ was as pure and undefiled with the least spot of sin as purity and innocence itself: yet he was pleased to make himself the greatest sinner in the world by imputation, and rendering himself a surety responsible for our debts. For, as it is said, 1 Cor. v. 21, "He who knew no sin was made sin for us." When the justice of God was lifting up the sword of vengeance over our heads, Christ snatched us away from the blow, and substituted his own body in our room, to receive the whole stroke of that dreadful retribution inflicted by the hand of an angry omnipotence.

But now, as God was pleased so to comport with his justice as not to put up the injury done it by sin without an equivalent compensation; so this being once paid down, that proceeding was to cease. The punishment due to sin was death, which being paid by Christ, divine justice could not any longer detain him in his grave. For what had this been else but to keep him in prison after the debt was paid? Satisfaction disarms justice, and payment cancels the bond. And that which Christ exhibited was full measure, pressed down and running over, even adequate to the nicest proportions, and the most exact demands of that severe and unrelenting attribute of God. So that his release proceeded not upon terms of courtesy but of claim. The gates of death flew open before him out of duty; and even that justice which was infinite, was yet circumscribed within the inviolable limits of what was due. Otherwise guilt would even grow out of expiation, the reckoning be inflamed by being paid, and punishment itself not appease but exasperate justice. Revenge indeed in the hands of a sinful mortal man is for the most part vast, unlimited, and unreasonable; but revenge in the hands of an infinite justice is not so infinite as to be also indefinite, but in all its actings proceeds by rule and determination, and cannot possibly surpass the bounds put to it by the merits of the cause and the measure of the offence. It is not the effect of mere choice and will; but springs out of the unalterable relation of equality between things and actions. In a word, the same justice of God which required him to deliver Christ to death, did afterwards as much engage him to deliver him from it.

4. The fourth ground of the impossibility of Christ's perpetual continuance under death was the necessity of his being believed in as a Saviour, and the impossibility of his being so without rising from the dead. As Christ by his death paid down a satisfaction for sin, so it was necessary that it should be declared to the world by such arguments as might found a rational belief of it; so that men's unbelief should be rendered inexcusable. But how could the world believe that he fully had satisfied for sin, so long as they saw death, the known wages of

sin, maintain its full force and power over him, holding him, like an obnoxious person, in durance and captivity? When a man is once imprisoned for debt, none can conclude the debt either paid by him or forgiven to him, but by the release of his person. Who could believe Christ to have been a God and a Saviour while he was hanging upon the tree? a dying, crucified God, a Saviour of the world, who could not save himself, would have been exploded by the universal consent of reason, as a horrible paradox and absurdity. Had not the resurrection followed the crucifixion, that scoff of the Jews had stood as an unanswerable argument against him, Mark xv. 31, "Himself he cannot save," and in the 32d verse, "Let him come down from the cross, and we will believe in him." Otherwise, surely, that which was the lowest instance of human weakness and mortality could be no competent demonstration of a Deity. To save is the effect of power, and of such a power as prevails to a complete victory and a triumph. But it is expressly affirmed, 2 Cor. xii. 4, "that Christ was crucified through weakness." Death was too hard for his humanity, and bore away the spoils of it for a time. So that, while Christ was in the grave, men might as well have expected that a person hung in chains should come down and head an army, as imagine that a dead body, continuing such, should be able to triumph over sin and death, which so potently triumphs over the living. The discourse of the two disciples going to Emmaus, and expecting no such thing as a resurrection, was upon that supposition hugely rational and significant, Luke xxiv. 21, "We trusted," said they, "that this had been he who should have redeemed Israel:" thereby clearly implying that upon his death they had let that confidence fall to the ground together with him. For they could not imagine that a breathless carcase could chase away the Roman eagles, and so recover the kingdom and nation of the Jews from under their subjection: which was the redemption that even the disciples (till they were further enlightened) promised themselves from their Messiah. But the argument would equally, nay, more strongly, hold against a spiritual redemption, supposing his continuance under a state of death, as being a thing in itself much more difficult. For how could such a one break the kingdom of darkness, and set his foot upon "principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses in high places," who himself fell a sacrifice to the wickedness of mortal men, and remained a captive in the lower parts of the earth, reduced to a condition, not only below men's envy, but below their very feet?

5. The fifth and last ground of the impossibility of Christ's perpetual continuance under a state of death was the nature of the priesthood which he had taken upon him. The apostle, Heb. viii. 4, says, that "if he were upon earth he should not be a priest." Certainly then much less could he be so, should

he continue under the earth. The two great works of his priesthood were to offer sacrifice, and then to make intercession for sinners, correspondent to the two works of the Mosaical priesthood; in which the priest first slew the lamb, and then with the blood of it entered into the holy of holies, there to appear before God in the behalf of the people. Christ, therefore, after that he had offered himself upon the cross, was to enter into heaven, and there presenting himself to the Father to make that sacrifice effectual to all the intents and purposes of it. Upon which account the apostle, to express his fitness for the priesthood infinitely beyond any of the sons of Aaron, states it upon this, Heb. vii. 25, that "he lives for ever to make intercession for us," and upon that very score also is "able to save to the uttermost." But surely the dead could not intercede for the living, nor was the grave a *sanctum sanctorum*. Had not Christ risen again, his blood indeed might have cried for vengeance upon his murderers, but not for mercy upon believers. In short, it had spoken no better things than the blood of Abel, which called for nothing but a fearful judgment upon the head of him who shed it. Christ's death merited a redemption for the world, but Christ, while dead, could not show forth the full effects of that redemption. He made the purchase at his death, but he could not take possession till he was returned to life. Ever since Christ ascended into heaven, he has been pursuing the great work begun by him upon the cross, and applying the virtue of his sacrifice to those for whom it was offered. It is affirmed by some, and that not without great probability of reason, that the souls of the saints who died before Christ's resurrection, did not actually enter into a state of complete glory till Christ, the great captain of their salvation, upon his ascension, first entered into it himself, and then made way for others. So that, according to that divine anthem of the church, "after that he had overcome the sharpness of death, then" at length, and not till then, "he opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers." And thus I have given five several reasons why it was not possible that a state of death should finally prevail over Christ, which was the thing to be proved. And I have nothing further to recommend to your consideration but only two things, which the very nature of the subject seems of itself to imprint upon all pious minds.

I. The first is a dehortation from sin, and that indeed the strongest that can be. For can we imagine that the second person in the glorious Trinity would concern himself to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer, and die, and at length rise again, only to render us the more secure and confident in our sins? Would he neither see nor endure any corruption in his dead body, that we should harbour all the filth and corruption imaginable in our immortal souls? Did he conquer and triumph over death, that we should be the slaves and captives of that which is

worse than death? Christ has declared that he will dwell in those whom he assumes into the society of his mystical body: but can we think that he who passed from a clean new sepulchre into a heavenly mansion, will descend from thence to take up his habitation in the rotten sepulchre of a heart possessed and polluted with the love of that which he infinitely hates? It will little avail us, that Christ rose from a temporal death, unless we also rise from a spiritual. For those who do not imitate as well as believe Christ's resurrection, must expect no benefit by it.

2. Christ's resurrection is a high and sovereign consolation against death. Death we know is the grand enemy of mankind, the merciless tyrant over nature, and the king of terrors. But blessed be God, Christ has given a mortal blow to his power, and broken his sceptre. And if we, by a thorough conquest of our sins, and rising from them, can be but able to say, "O sin! where is thy power?" we may very rationally and warrantably say thereupon, "O death! where is thy sting?" So that when we come to resign back these frail bodies, these vessels of mortality to the dust from whence they were taken, we may yet say of our souls as Christ did of the damsel whom he raised up, that "she was not dead, but only slept;" for in like manner we shall as certainly rise out of the grave, and triumph over the dishonours of its rottenness and putrefaction, as we rise in the morning out of our beds, with bodies refreshed and advanced into higher and nobler perfections. For the head being once risen, we may be sure the members cannot stay long behind. And Christ is already risen and gone before, to prepare mansions for all those who belong to him under that high relation, that "where he is, they," to their eternal comfort, "may be also," rejoicing and singing praises and hallelujahs "to him who sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever."

To whom be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, to eternal ages. Amen.

SERMON III.

THE CHRISTIAN PENTECOST; OR THE SOLEMN EFFUSION OF THE HOLY GHOST; IN THE SEVERAL MIRACULOUS GIFTS CONFERRED BY HIM UPON THE APOSTLES AND FIRST CHRISTIANS.

[Preached at Westminster Abbey, 1692.]

1 COR. XII. 4.

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

OUR blessed Saviour having newly changed his crown of thorns for a crown of glory, and ascending up on high took possession of his royal estate and sovereignty, according to the custom of princes, is here treating with this lower world (now at so great a distance from him) by his ambassador. And, for the greater splendour of the embassy, and authority of the message by an ambassador noways inferior to himself, even the Holy Ghost, the third person in the blessed Trinity, "in glory equal, in majesty co-eternal;" and therefore most peculiarly fit not only as a deputy, but as a kind of *alter idem* to supply his place and presence here upon earth. And indeed had he not been equal to him in the Godhead, he could no more have supplied his place, than he could have filled it: which we know, in the accounts of the world, are things extremely different; as by sad and scandalous experience is too often found.

Now the sum of this his glorious negotiation was to confirm and ratify Christ's doctrine, to seal the new charter of the world's blessedness given by Christ himself, and drawn up by his apostles: and certainly, it was not a greater work first to publish, than it was afterwards to confirm it. For Christianity being a religion made up of truth and miracle, could not receive its growth from any power less than that which first gave it its birth. And being withal a doctrine contrary to corrupt nature, and to those things which men most eagerly loved, to wit, their worldly interests and their carnal lusts; it must needs have quickly decayed, and withered, and died away, if not watered by the same hand of omnipotence by which it was first planted.

Nothing could keep it up, but such a standing, mighty power, as should be able upon all occasions to countermand and control nature; such a one as should at the same time both instruct and astonish; and baffle the disputes of reason by the obvious overpowering convictions of sense.

And this was the design of the Spirit's mission. That the same Holy Ghost, who had given Christ his conception, might now give Christianity its confirmation. And this he did by that wonderful and various effusion of his miraculous gifts upon the first messengers and propagators of this divine religion. For as our Saviour himself said, John iv. 48, "Unless ye see signs and wonders you will not believe." So that sight was to introduce belief: and accordingly, the first conquest and conviction was made upon the eye, and from thence passed victorious to the heart.

This therefore was their rhetoric, this their method of persuasion. Their words were works: divinity and physic went together: they cured the body, and thereby convinced the soul: they conveyed and enforced all their exhortations, not by the arts of eloquence, but by the gifts of tongues; these were the speakers, and miracle the interpreter.

Now in treating of these words, I shall consider these three things.

I. What those gifts were, which were conferred by the Spirit both upon the apostles and first professors of Christianity.

II. What is imported and to be understood by their diversity: and

III. And lastly, What are the consequences of their emanation from one and the same Spirit.

I. And first for the first of them. These gifts are called in the original *χαρίσματα*, that is to say, *acts of grace* or *favour*; and signify here certain qualities and perfections, which the Spirit of God freely bestowed upon men, for the better enabling them to preach the gospel, and to settle the Christian religion in the world; and accordingly we will consider them under that known dichotomy, or division, by which they stand divided into ordinary and extraordinary.

And first, for the ordinary gifts of the Spirit: these he conveys to us by the mediation of our own endeavours. And as he, who both makes the watch and winds up the wheels of it, may not improperly be said to be the author of its motion; so God, who first created and since sustains the powers and faculties of the soul, may justly be called the cause of all those perfections and improvements, which the said faculties shall attain unto by their respective operations. For that which gives the form, gives also the consequents of that form; and the principle, with all its appendant actions, is to be referred to the same donor.

But God forbid that I should determine God's title to our actions barely in his giving us the power and faculty of acting. Durandus indeed, an eminent schoolman, held so, and so must Pelagius and his followers hold too, if they will be true to, and abide by their own principles.

But undoubtedly, God does not only give the power, but also vouchsafes an active influence and concurrence to the production of every particular action, so far as it has either a natural or a moral goodness in it.

And therefore, in all acquired gifts or habits, such as are those of philosophy, oratory, or divinity, we are properly *συνεργοὶ*, "co-workers with God." And God ordinarily gives them to none but such as labour hard for them. They are so his gifts, that they are also our own acquisitions. His assistance and our own study are the joint and adequate cause of these perfections: and to imagine the contrary, is all one, as if a man should think to be a scholar, barely by his master's teaching, without his own learning. In all these cases, God is ready to do his part, but not to do his own and ours too.

Secondly, The other sort of the Spirit's gifts are extraordinary. Which are so absolutely and entirely from God, that the soul, into which they are conveyed, contributes nothing to the obtaining of them but a bare reception: as when you pour some generous wine or liquor into a cask or vessel, that affords nothing to its own fulness, but a mere capacity; the rest it owes solely to the liberal hand that infused it: and, no doubt, from an allusion to this such endowments are said to be by way of infusion from the Holy Ghost.

Of which kind were the gift of miracles, the gift of healing, the gift of prophecy and of speaking with tongues; which great things might indeed be the object of men's admiration, and sometimes also the motive of their envy, but never the effect or purchase of their own endeavours.

Now concerning these gifts we must observe also, that there was no small difference amongst them, as to the manner of their inexistence in the person who had them.

For one of them, to wit, the gift of tongues, after its first infusion by the Spirit, might be in a man by habitual inherence, as a standing principle or power residing in the soul, and enabling it upon any occasion to express itself in several languages. There being no difference between the acquired and the supernatural knowledge of tongues, as to the nature and quality of the things themselves, but only in respect of their first obtainment, that one is by industrious acquisition, the other by divine infusion.

But then for the gifts of healing the sick, raising the dead, and the like; inasmuch as these were immediate emanations from, and peculiar effects of an infinite and divine power. Such a power could not be made habitually to inhere and reside in the apostles; nor indeed in any created being whatsoever. But only by an exterior assistance, the power of God was ready at hand, upon special and emergent occasions, at their invocation or word (as God should think fit) to produce such miraculous effects. For if this power of healing had been habitually lodged in the

apostles, so that they might exert and make use of it when they pleased, it will be hard to give a satisfactory reason why St. Paul should leave Trophimus at Miletum sick, as we find he did, 2 Tim. iv. 20.

And then lastly, for the gift of prophecy, and foretelling future events; neither was this in the soul by constant inhesion and habitual abode; but (as we may not unfitly express it) only by sudden strictures, by transient immissions, and representations of the ideas of things future, to the imagination. In a word, it was in the mind not as an inhabitant, but as a guest; that is, by intermittent returns and ecstasies, by occasional raptures and revelations; as is clear from what we read of the prophets in the Old Testament. And thus much I thought good to discourse of the nature of these gifts, and to show what kind of things they were; how they qualified and affected the apostles and primitive Christians, in the exercise of them; that so we may not abuse our understandings by an empty notion of the word, without a clear and distinct apprehension of the thing.

And here, I doubt not but some will be apt to inquire, how long these extraordinary and miraculous gifts continued in the church: for the resolution of which the very nature of the thing itself will suggest thus much, that the conferring of these gifts, being in order to the establishment of a church, and the settling of a new religion in the world, their duration was to be proportioned to the need which that new religion had of such credentials and instruments of confirmation. For when Christianity first appeared in the world, it found it under the mighty prejudice and prepossession of two contrary religions, but both of them equally bent and set against that, to wit, Gentilism and Judaism. Which prejudices nothing could conquer but the arm of omnipotence itself, as it were, made bare before them in such stupendous works, as could not but convince them to their face that it was a religion which came from God. But when these prejudices were once removed by the actual entertainment of, and submission to the Christian faith, there could not be the same use or need of miracles then, which there was before. For still we must remember, that the state of a church in its infancy and first beginnings, and in its maturity and continuance, is very different, and consequently that the exigencies of it, under each condition, must equally differ too. It is a much harder work first to advance, and put a thing into motion, than to continue and keep up that motion being once begun; for though indeed, as we observed before, there is an omnipotence required to maintain, as well as first to set up the Christian church, yet it does not therefore follow that this omnipotence must still exert itself to the same degree, and after the same way in one case, that it does in the other.

Wherefore the use and purpose of miracles being extraordinary,
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and to serve only for a time, they were not by their continuance to thwart their design, nor to be made common by their being perpetual. The exact period of their duration can hardly be assigned; but manifest it is from all history, that they, or at least some of them, continued long after the apostles' time; as we may gather from the several ages of those eminent fathers and Christian writers, who have so freely given in their testimony concerning the ejecting of evil spirits from persons possessed, as very common in their time in the Christian church; a power no doubt supernatural, and therefore miraculous. Such as were Justin Martyr, who lived something before the middle of the second century, and Irenæus who lived about thirty years after, and Tertullian who lived in the latter end of the second and the beginning of the third, and Minutius Felix thereabouts, and St. Cyprian about the middle of the third, and Lactantius about the beginning of the fourth. All these, I say, according to the times they lived in, speak of this power of casting out devils (but more especially Tertullian in the twenty-third chapter of his Apologetic) with so much assurance, that it must needs prove it to have been very frequent amongst the Christians in those days; as several passages in those forementioned writers particularly declare: which might easily be produced and rehearsed by us, could we spare room enough for them in so short a discourse.

But however, certain it is, that now these extraordinary and miraculous powers are ceased, and that upon as good reason as at first they began. For when the spiritual building is consummate, and not only the corner stone laid, but the superstructure also finished, to what purpose should the scaffolds any longer stand? which when they leave off to contribute to the building, can serve for little else but to upbraid the folly of the builder. Besides, that by so long a continuance miracle would almost turn into nature, or at least would look very like it; the rarities of heaven would grow cheap and common, and (which is very preposterous to conceive) they would be miracles without a wonder.

The papists indeed, who having swallowed and digested the belief of so many monstrous contradictions, would do but very unwisely and disagreeably to themselves, if for ever after, they should stick at any advantageous absurdity; these, I say, hold that the gift of miracles still continues ordinary in their church; and that the Christian religion has still the same need of such miraculous confirmations as it had at first. Where, if by the Christian they mean their own popish religion, I am so fully of their mind, that I think there is need, not only of daily, but even of hourly, or rather continual miracles, to confirm it, if it were but in that one single article of transubstantiation. But then, we know whose badge and character the scripture makes it, to come in lying wonders; and we know also, that lying wonders are true impostures: and theirs are of that nature, that the fallacy

is so gross, and the cheat so transparent in them, that, as it hardens the Jews and Mahometans with a desperate invincible prejudice against Christianity, as a thing as false as those miracles which they see it recommended by; so, I am confident, that it causes many Christians also to nauseate their own religion, and to fall into secret atheism; being apt to think (as even these impostors also pretend) that the very miracles of the apostles might be of the same nature with those which they see daily acted by those spiritual jugglers: so that hereby the grand proof of Christianity falls to the ground, and has no force or hold upon men's minds at all. Whereas our Saviour himself laid the main stress and credit of his gospel, and of his mission from God, upon his miracles. "The works that I do," says he, "bear witness of me," John x. 25. And "Believe me for my very works' sake," John xiv. 11. And "Had I not done amongst them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin," John xv. 24. So that we see here, that the credit of all turned upon his miracles, his mighty and supernatural works.

But as we know it often falls out, that when a man has once got the character of a liar, even truth itself is suspected, if not absolutely disbelieved, when it comes from the mouth of such a one; so these miracle-mongers, having alarmed the world round about them to a discernment of their tricks, when they came afterwards to preach Christianity, especially to infidels, and to press it upon men's belief in the strength of those miraculous works which were truly and really done by Christ; yet, since they pretend the same of their own works too, which all people see through, and know to be lies and impostures, all that they preach of Christ is presently looked upon as false and fictitious, and leaves the minds of men locked up under a fixed, obstinate, and impregnable infidelity. Such a fatal blow has the legerdmain of those wretches given to the Christian religion, and such jealousies have they raised in some men's thoughts against it by their false miracles and fabulous stories of the romantic feats of their pretended saints. In all which there is nothing indeed strange or miraculous, but the impudence and impiety of such as report and make them, and the folly of such as can believe them.

II. Pass we now to the second thing proposed, which is to show, *what is meant by this diversity of gifts*, mentioned in the text. It imports, I conceive, these two things.

1. Something by way of affirmation, which is variety.

2. Something by way of negation, which is contrariety.

1. And first for the first of them. It imports variety; of which excellent qualification it is hard to say whether it makes more for use or ornament. It is the very beauty of providence, and the delight of the world. It is that which keeps alive desire, which would otherwise flag and tire, and be quickly weary of any

one single object. It both supplies our affections, and entertains our admiration: equally serving the innocent pleasures and the important occasions of life. And now all these advantages God would have this desirable quality derive even upon his church too. In which great body there are and must be several members having their several uses, offices, and stations: as in the twenty-eighth verse of this chapter (where my text is) the apostle tells us, that "God has placed in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly preachers; after that miracles; then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." The particular function and employment of so many parts subserving the joint interest and design of the whole. As the motion of a clock is a complicated motion of so many wheels fitly put together; and life itself but the result of so many several operations, all issuing from and contributing to the support of the same body. The great help and furtherance of action is order; and the parent of order is distinction. No sense, faculty, or member, must encroach upon or interfere with the duty and office of another. For, as the same apostle discourses in the next two verses, "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?" No, but as in the natural body the eye does not speak, nor the tongue see, so neither in the spiritual is every one who has the gift of prophecy endued also with the gift and spirit of government; every one, who may speak well and pertinently enough upon a text, is not therefore presently fit to rule a diocese; nor is a nimble tongue always attended with a strong and a steady head. If all were preachers, who should govern? or rather, indeed, who could be governed? If the body of the church were all ear, men would be only hearers of the word, and where would then be the doers? For such, I am sure, we are most to seek for in our days, in which sad experience shows that hearing of sermons has, with most, swallowed up and devoured the practice of them, and manifestly serves instead of it; rendering many zealots amongst us as really guilty of the superstition of resting in the bare *opus operatum* of this duty, as the papists are or can be charged to be in any of their religious performances whatsoever. The apostle justly reproaches such with "itching ears," 2 Tim. iv. 3. And I cannot see but that the itch in the ear is as bad a distemper as in any other part of the body, and perhaps a worse.

But to proceed; God has use of all the several tempers and constitutions of men, to serve the occasions and exigencies of his church by; amongst which some are of a sanguine, cheerful, and debonaire disposition, having their imaginations for the most part filled and taken up with pleasing ideas and images of things; seldom or never troubling their thoughts, either by looking too deep into them, or dwelling too long upon them. And these are

not properly framed to serve the church either in the knotty, dark, and less pleasing parts of religion, but are fitted rather for the airy, joyful offices of devotion; such as are praise and thanksgiving, jubilations, and hallelujahs, which, though indeed not so difficult, are yet as pleasing a work to God as any other. For they are the noble employment of saints and angels; and a lively resemblance of the glorified and beatific state; in which all that the blessed spirits do, is to rejoice in the God who made and saved them, to sing his praises, and to adore his perfections.

Again, there are others of a melancholy, reserved, and severe temper, who think much, and speak little: and these are the fittest to serve the church in the pensive, afflictive parts of religion, in the austerities of repentance and mortification, in a retirement from the world, and a settled composure of their thoughts to self-reflection and meditation. And such also are the ablest to deal with troubled and distressed consciences, to meet with their doubts, and to answer their objections, and to ransack every corner of their shifting and fallacious hearts, and, in a word, to lay before them the true state of their souls, having so frequently descended into, and taken a strict account of their own. And this is so great a work, that there are not many whose minds and tempers are capable of it, who yet may be serviceable enough to the church in other things. And it is the same thoughtful and reserved temper of spirit, which must enable others to serve the church in the hard and controversial parts of religion. Which sort of men (though they should never rub men's itching ears from the pulpit) the church can no more be without, than a garrison can be without soldiers, or a city without walls; or that a man can defend himself with his tongue, when his enemy comes against him with his sword. And therefore, great pity it is, that such as God has eminently and peculiarly furnished, and, as it were, cut out for this service, should be cast upon, and compelled to the popular, speaking, noisy part of divinity; it being all one, as if, when a town is besieged, the governor of it should call off a valiant and expert soldier from the walls, to sing him a song or play him a lesson upon the violin at a banquet, and then turn him out of the town, because he could not sing and play as well as he could fight. And yet ridiculous as this is, it is but too like the irrational and absurd humour of the present age; which thinks all sense and worth confined wholly to the pulpit. And many excellent persons, because they cannot make a noise with chapter and verse, and harangue it twice a day to factious tradesmen and ignorant old women, are esteemed of as nothing, and scarce thought worthy to eat the church's bread. But for all these false notions and wrong measures of things and persons, so scandalously prevalent amongst us, "wisdom," as our Saviour tells us, "is and will be justified of her children."

But then again, there are others besides these, who are of a

warmer and more fervent spirit, having much of heat and fire in their constitution: and God may and does serve his church even by such kind of persons as these also, as being particularly fitted to preach the terrifying rigours and curses of the law to obstinate daring sinners; which is a work as absolutely necessary and of as high a consequence to the good of souls, as it is, that men should be driven, if they cannot be drawn off from their sins, that they should be cut and lanced if they cannot otherwise be cured, and that the terrible trump of the last judgment should be always sounding in their ears, if nothing else can awaken them. But then, while such persons are thus busied in preaching of judgment, it is much to be wished that they would do it with judgment too; and not preach hell and damnation to sinners so, as if they were pleased with what they preached; no, let them rather take heed that they mistake not their own fierce temper for the mind of God; for some I have known to do so, and that at such a rate, that it was easy enough to distinguish the humour of the speaker from the nature of the thing he spoke. Let ministers threaten death and destruction even to the very worst of men in such a manner, that it may appear to all their sober hearers that they do not desire, but fear that these dreadful things should come to pass: let them declare God's wrath against the hardened and impenitent, as I have seen a judge condemn a malefactor, with tears in his eyes. For surely much more should a dispenser of the word, while he is pronouncing the infinitely more killing sentence of the divine law, grieve with an inward-bleeding compassion for the misery of those forlorn wretches, whom it is like to pass upon. But I never knew any of the Geneva or Scotch model (which sort of sanctified reprobationers we abound with) either use or like this way of preaching in my life; but generally whips and scorpions, wrath and vengeance, fire and brimstone, made both top and bottom, front and rear, first and last, of all their discourses.

But then on the contrary, there are others again, of a gentler, a softer, and more tender genius, and these are full as serviceable for the work of the ministry, as the former sort could be, though not in the same way; as being much fitter to represent the meekness of Moses, than to preach his law; to bind up the broken-hearted, to speak comfort and refreshment to the weary, and to take off the burden from the heavy laden. Nature itself seems peculiarly to have fitted such for the dispensations of grace. And when they are once put into the ministry, they are, as it were, marked and singled out by Providence to do those benign offices to the souls of men, which persons of a rougher and more vehement disposition are by no means so fit or able to do. These are the men whom God pitches upon for the heralds of his mercy, with a peculiar emphasis and felicity of address, to proclaim and issue out the pardons of the gospel, to close up the wounds

which the legal preacher had made, to bathe and supple them with the oil of gladness; and in a word to crown the sorrows of repentance with the joys of assurance. And thus we have seen how the gospel must have both its Boanerges and its Barnabas, sons of thunder and sons of consolation: the first, as it were, to cleanse the air and purge the soul, before it can be fit for the refreshments of a sunshine, the beams of mercy, and the smiles of a Saviour.

David had shown himself but a mean psalmist, had his skill reached no further than to one note: and therefore, Psalm ci. 1, we have him singing of judgment as well as mercy; and so raising the sweetest harmony out of the seeming discord of the most disagreeing attributes. There can be no composition in any thing, without some multiplicity and diversity of parts: and therefore we have a catalogue of those gifts, which did, as it were, compound and make up the primitive church, in 1 Cor. xii. 8—10: where the apostle tells us, that “to one is given the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, to another faith;” with many more such like gifts there reckoned up; and indeed so many and various were the gifts poured out by the Spirit of God upon the first preachers of the gospel, that there is need almost of the gift of tongues to rehearse them.

Of which great variety, as we have hitherto observed the use, so it is intended also for the ornament of the church. I say ornament: for I cannot persuade myself that God ever designed his church for a rude, naked, unbeautiful lump; or to lay the foundations of purity in the ruins of decency. The entrance and gate of Solomon’s temple was called Beautiful: and as there were several orders of priests and Levites belonging to it, so they had their several offices, their several chambers and apartments in that temple. It was a kind of representation of heaven; in which, our Saviour tells us, there are many mansions. But behold! there are wiser, much wiser than Solomon amongst us, who will have it quite otherwise in the Christian church. Nothing of order or distinction, nothing of splendour or dress must be allowed of here. No, they are for “lying in the dust before God,” as their word is; and therefore will have nothing but dust and nastiness for the church’s furniture. To attempt a confutation of such persons would be superfluous; and indeed I have no more to say for those who contend for such a sordid and mean condition of the church, but that in this they do not so much speak their devotion as their education: it being generally found that a slovenly way of breeding disposes men to a kind of slovenly religion.

Much might be spoken by way of analogy between the internal and external, the spiritual and the material ornaments of the church; but both of them serve to dress and set off the spouse of Christ; the first to recommend her to his own eyes, and the latter to the eyes of the world.

Where would be the beauty of the heavens themselves, if it were not for the multitude of the stars and the variety of their influences? and for the earth here below, and those who dwell therein, certainly we might live without the plumes of peacocks, and the curious colours of flowers; without so many different odours, so many several tastes, and such an infinite diversity of airs and sounds. But where would then be the glory and lustre of the universe, the flourish and gaiety of nature, if our senses were forced to be always poring upon the same things, without the diversion of change and the quickening relish of variety? And now, when matters stand thus, may we not justly say, "If God so clothes the fields," so paints the flowers, and paves the very places we tread upon, and with such curiosity provides for all our senses, which yet are but the servants and under officers of the soul: shall he not much more provide for the soul itself and its own service thereby, in the glorious economy and great concerns of the church? And moreover, does not such a liberal effusion of gifts equally argue both the power and the bounty of the giver? Number and multitude are the signs of riches, and the materials of plenty; and therefore though unity in the government and communion of the church is indeed a great blessing, yet in the gifts and endowments of it it would be but penury and a curse. But

2. As this diversity of the Spirit's gifts imports variety, so it excludes contrariety: different they are, but they are not opposite. There is no jar, no combat, or contest between them, but all are disposed of with mutual agreements and a happy subordination; for as variety adorns, so opposition destroys; things most different in nature may yet be united in the same design; and the most distant lines may meet and clasp in the same centre.

As for instance, one would think that the spirit of meekness and the spirit of zeal stood at that distance of contrariety, as to defy all possibility either of likeness or reconciliation; and yet, as we have already shown, they both may and do equally serve and carry on the great end and business of religion. And the same Spirit which baptizes with water, baptizes also with fire. It is an art to attain the same end by several methods; and to make things of a quite contrary operation to concur in one and the same effect.

III. Come we now to the third and last thing proposed from the words; which is to show, *what are the consequences of this emanation of so many and different gifts from one and the same Spirit*: I shall instance in four, directly and naturally deducible from it: as

1. If the Spirit works such variety of gifts, and those in so vast a multitude, and for the most part above the force of nature,

certainly it is but rational to conclude, that it is a being superior to nature, and so may justly challenge to itself a Deity. There have been several who have impugned the deity of the Holy Ghost, though not in the same manner; but the principal of them come within these two sorts.

(1.) Macedonius and his followers, who allowed him to be a person, but denied his deity: affirming him to be the chief angel, the supreme and most excellent of those blessed spirits employed by God, administering the affairs of the church, and conveying good suggestions to the minds of men, and for that purpose to be called "the Holy Spirit;" and sometimes simply and *κατ' ἐξοχήν*, or by way of eminence, "the Spirit." And the same was held by one Biddle, a heretic of some note here in England, a little before the Restoration: that is to say, while confusion and toleration gave countenance to almost all religions, except the true.

(2.) But secondly, Socinus and his school deny both the deity of the Holy Ghost, and his personal subsistence too; not granting him to be a person, but only the power of God: to wit, that *vis* or *ἐνέργεια*, by which he effects or produces things. And amongst those who assert this, none have given such bold strokes at the deity of the Holy Ghost, as Crellius, in his book *De uno Deo Patre*, and his other *Deo Spiritu Sancto*.

Now to draw forth and insist upon all the arguments and texts of scripture which used to be traversed on both sides in this controversy, would be a thing neither to be done within this compass of time, nor perhaps so proper for this exercise; and therefore let it suffice us upon the warrant of express scripture, not sophisticated by nice and forced expositions, but plainly interpreted by the general tradition of the church (to which all private reason ought in reason to give place), to confess and adore the deity of the Holy Ghost.

Now this Holy Spirit is in the church as the soul in the natural body: for as the same soul does in and by the several parts of the body exercise several functions and operations; so the Holy Ghost, while he animates the mystical body of Christ, causes in it several gifts and powers, by which he enables it to exert variety of actions. And as in the river Nilus, it is the same fountain which supplies the seven streams: so when we read of the seven spirits, Rev. iv. 5, they are but so many several gifts of the same Spirit, all bearing the name and title of their donor; as it is usual for so many several volumes to bear the single denomination of their author; and we say properly enough, that such a one has read Cicero or Plutarch, when he has read their works.

But now surely this glorious person or being, who thus "enlightens the minds of all men coming into the world" in some measure, and of the church more especially, cannot be in the rank and number of created beings. The heathens attributed a

kind of divinity or godhead to springs because of that continual inexhaustible emanation from them, resembling a kind of infinity. But here we see the very gifts of the Spirit to be divine: and where we find such a divinity in the stream, certainly we may well ascribe it in a more transcendent manner to the fountain: besides, if the Holy Ghost were not God, I cannot see how our bodies could well be called his temples; since none but God can challenge to himself the prerogative of a temple. And so much for the first consequent. But

2. This great diversity of the Spirit's gifts may read a lecture of humility to some, and of contentment to others. God indeed, in this great scheme of the creation, has drawn some capital letters, set forth some master-pieces, and furnished them with higher abilities than ordinary, and given them gifts, as it were, with both hands: but for all that, none can brag of a monopoly of them, none has so absolutely engrossed them all, as to be that thing of which we may say, Here we see what and how much God can do. No, God has written upon no created being the utmost stint of his power, but only the free issues and products of his pleasure. God has made no man *in opprobrium nature*, only to overlook his fellow creatures, to upbraid them with their defects, and to discourage them with the amazing distance of the comparison: he has filled no man's intellects so full, but he has left some vacuities in them, that may sometimes send him for supplies to minds of a much lower pitch: he has stocked no land or country with such universal plenty, without the mixture of some wants, to be the ground and cause of commerce: for mutual wants and mutual perfections together, are the bond and cement of conversation. The vast knowledge and ruling abilities of Moses might yet stand in need of Aaron's elocution: and he who "speaks with the tongue of angels," and the greatest fluency of spiritual rhetoric, may yet be at a loss when he comes to matters of controversy, and to assert the truth against the assaults and sophistry of a subtle opponent. God indeed can, and sometimes happily does unite both these gifts in the same person: but where he does not, let not him who can preach condemn him who can only dispute: neither let him who can dispute, despise him who can only preach, for (as we have shown before) the church is served by both, and has equally need of some men to speak and declare the word, and of others to defend it: it being enough, and too often more than enough, for one man to maintain what another says. In which work, the speaking part is indeed the more easy, but the defensive the more glorious.

And as this may give some check to the presumption of the most raised understandings, so it should prevent the despondency of the meanest: for the apostle makes this very use of it in the 21st and 22nd verses. Where he would not have even the low-

est and poorest member of the church to be dejected, upon the consideration of what it wants, but rather be comforted in the sense of what it has. Let not the foot trample upon itself because it does not rule the body, but consider that it has the honour to support it. Nay, the greatest abilities are sometimes beholding to the very meanest, if but for this only, that without them they would want the gloss and lustre of a foil. The two talents went into heaven as easily as the five: and God has put a peculiar usefulness even into the smallest members of the body, answerable to some need or defect in the greatest; thereby to level them to a mutual intercourse of compliance and benefaction; which alone can keep things equal, and is indeed the very poise and ballast of society. And thus much for the second consequent. But

3. The foregoing doctrine affords us also a touchstone for the trial of spirits; for such as are the gifts, such must be also the Spirit from which they flow: and since both of them have been so much pretended to, it is well for the church that it has the rule of judgment, and a note of discrimination. There is none, who is not wilfully a stranger to the affairs of our Israel, but has had the noise and blusters of gifted brethren, and of persons pretending to the Spirit, ringing in his ears. Concerning which plea of theirs, since we all know that there are spirits both good and bad, it cannot be denied, but that in some sense they might have the spirit (such a spirit as it was) and that in a very large measure: but as for their gifts, we must examine them by the standard of those here mentioned by the apostle.

And first for that of prophecy: these men were once full of a prophecy that the world should be destroyed in the year 1656; because, forsooth, the flood came upon the old world in that year reckoning from the creation. And again, that the downfall of pope and antichrist together with that of monarchy and episcopacy (which they always accounted as limbs of antichrist) should be in the year 1666; and that because some remarkable mention is made of the number 666 in the Revelation; with many other such like predictions; the event of all which has shown that those men were not of God's privy council; but on the contrary, that all their prophecies were like those of almanacks, which warn every wise body to prepare against foul weather, by their foretelling fair.

And then for the gift of healing, let a bleeding church and state show how notably they were gifted that way. They pleaded the chirurgeons indeed with a witness, but we never yet heard that they acted the physician; all their practice upon the body politic was with powder and ball, sword and pistol. No saving of life with those men, but by purging away the estate.

And likewise for the gift of discerning of spirits: they had their triers, that is, a court appointed for the trial of ministers:

but most properly called Cromwell's inquisition; in which they would pretend to know men's hearts, and inward bent of their spirits (as their word was) by their very looks. But the truth is, as the chief pretence of those triers, was to inquire into men's gifts; so if they found them but well gifted in the hand, they never looked any further; for a full and free hand was with them an abundant demonstration of a *gracious heart*; a word in great request in those times.

And moreover for the gift of divers tongues, it is certain that they scarce speak the same thing for two days together. Though otherwise it must be confessed that they were none of the greatest linguists; their own mother tongue serving all their occasions, without ever so much as looking into the fathers, who always spoke the language of the beast to such as could not understand them. Latin was with them a mortal crime, and Greek, instead of being owned for the language of the Holy Ghost (as in the New Testament it is), was looked upon like the sin against it; so that in a word, they had all the confusions of Babel amongst them without the diversity of tongues.

And then lastly for the gift of interpreting; they thought themselves no ordinary men at expounding a chapter; if the turning of a few rational significant words and sentences into a loose, tedious, impertinent harangue could be called an exposition. But above all for their interpreting gift, you must take them upon Ezekiel, Daniel, and the Revelation: and from thence, as it were, out of a dark prophetic cloud, thundering against the old cavaliers and the church of England, and (as I may but too appositely express it) breaking them upon the wheels in Ezekiel, casting them to the beasts in Daniel, and pouring upon them all the vials in the Revelation. After which let any one deny it who durst, that the black decree was absolutely passed upon those *malignants*, and that they were all of them, to a man, sons of reprobation.

And thus I think I have reckoned up most of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, and compared them with those of our late gifted brethren. Amongst all which divine gifts I must declare, that I cannot find the gift of canting and whining, and making faces; that is, of speaking bad sense with worse looks; which yet those men used to call the language of Canaan. Nor can I find the gift of uttering every sudden, crude, undigested thought coming over their minds, and of being impudently bold and familiar with almighty God in prayer.

I cannot find the gift of exploding the mysteries and peculiar *credenda* of the gospel, in order to the turning Christianity into bare morality.

I cannot find the gift of accounting tenderness of conscience against law, as a thing sacred, but tenderness of conscience according to law, as a crime to be prosecuted almost to death.

In a word, I cannot find the gifts of rebelling, plundering, sequestering, robbing churches, and murdering kings.* And all this purely for the sake of conscience and religion.

These things I say (whether it be through the weakness of my discerning faculties, or whatsoever else may be the cause) I cannot, for my life, find amongst the primitive gifts of the Spirit.

And therefore, wheresoever I do find them, let men talk never so much of inward motions, and extraordinary calls of the Spirit, of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and of the public good, of moderation and of a healing spirit, and the like; yet long and sad experience having taught us the true meaning of all these fine and fallacious terms; I must needs say both of them and the spirit from which they proceed, in those words of St. James, iii. 15, that they "descend not from above, but are earthly, sensual, and devilish." These are the names which God knows and calls them by, though schismatics and hypocrites may call them reformation. But

4. In the fourth and last place, this emanation of gifts from the Spirit assures us that knowledge and learning are by no means opposite to grace; since we see gifts as well as graces conferred by the same Spirit. But amongst those of the late re-forming age, whom we have been speaking of, all learning was utterly cried down. So that with them the best preachers were such as could not read, and the ablest divines such as could not write. In all their preachments they so highly pretended to the Spirit, that they could hardly so much as spell the letter. To be blind was with them the proper qualification of a spiritual guide; and to be book-learned, as they called it, and to be irreligious, were almost terms convertible. None were thought fit for the ministry but tradesmen and mechanics, because none else were allowed to have the Spirit. Those only were accounted like St. Paul, who could work with their hands, and in a literal sense, drive the nail home, and be able to make a pulpit before they preached in it.

But the Spirit in the primitive church took quite another method; being still as careful to furnish the head as to sanctify the heart; and as he wrought miracles to found and establish a church by these extraordinary gifts, so it would have been a greater miracle to have done it without them.

God, as he is the giver of grace, so he is the Father of lights; he neither admits darkness in himself, nor approves it in others. And therefore those who place all religion in the heats of a furious zeal, without the due illuminations of knowledge, know not of what spirit they are; indeed of such a spirit, as begins in darkness, leads to it, and ends in it.

* Notwithstanding the sanctified character they bear in the republicans' new gospel, viz. Ludlow's Memoirs; and in the judgment of those who like such practices, and therefore publish such books, to the manifest affront of the monarchy they live under. A strange unaccountable way, doubtless, of supporting it.

But certainly we shall one day find, that a religion so much resembling hell, neither was nor could be the readiest way to heaven. But on the contrary, that the Spirit always guides and instructs before he saves; and that as he brings to happiness only by the ways of holiness; so he never leads to true holiness, but by the paths of knowledge.

To which Holy Spirit, together with the Father and the Son, three persons and one God, be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON IV.

THE PECULIAR CARE AND CONCERN OF PROVIDENCE FOR THE PROTECTION AND DEFENCE OF KINGS.

[Preached at Westminster Abbey, Nov. 5, 1675.]

PSALM CXLIV. 10, former part.

It is he that giveth salvation unto kings.

THE greatest and most magnificent title by which God exhibits himself to the sons of men, is, that he is King of kings, and that the governors of the earth are his subjects, princes and emperors his vassals, and thrones his footstools; and consequently that there is no absolute monarch in the world but one. And from the same also it follows, that there is nothing which subjects can justly expect from their prince, but princes may expect from God; and nothing which princes demand from their subjects, but God in a higher manner and by a better claim requires from them. Now the relation between prince and subject essentially involves in it these two things:

First, Obedience from the subject to all the laws and just commands of his prince. And accordingly, as kings themselves have a sovereign over them, so they have laws over them too. Laws which lay the same obligation upon crowned heads, that they do upon the meanest peasant: for no prerogative can bar piety: no man is too great to be bound to be good. He who wields the sceptre, and shines in the throne, has a great account to make, and a great Master to make it to; and there is no man sent into the world to rule, who is not sent also to obey.

Secondly, The other thing imported in this relation is protection vouchsafed from the sovereign to the subject. Upon which account it is, that as God with one hand gives a law, so with the other he defends the obedient. And this is the highest prerogative of worldly empire, and the brightest jewel in the diadems of princes, that by being God's immediate subjects, they are his immediate care, and entitled to his more especial protection; that they have both an omniscience, in a peculiar manner, to wake over them, and an omnipotence to support them: and that they are not the legions which they command, but the God whom they obey, who must both guard their persons and secure their regalia. For it is he, and he only, "who giveth salvation unto kings."

The words of the text, with a little variation, run naturally into this one proposition, which containing in it the full sense of them, shall be the subject of our following discourse, viz.,

That God in the government of the world exercises a peculiar and extraordinary providence over the persons and lives of princes.

The prosecution of which proposition shall lie in these four things.

I. To show upon what account any act of God's providence may be said to be peculiar and extraordinary.

II. To show how and by what means God does after such an extraordinary manner save and deliver princes.

III. To show the reasons why he does so. And

IV. And lastly, To draw something by way of inference and conclusion from the whole. Of all which in their order. And

I. For the first of these; which is to show *upon what account any act of God's providence may be said to be peculiar and extraordinary*. Providence in the government of the world acts for the most part by the mediation of second causes; which though they proceed according to a principle of nature, and a settled course and tenor of acting (supposing still the same circumstances), yet Providence acting by them, may in several instances of it be said to be extraordinary upon a threefold account; as

1. When a thing falls out beside the common and usual operation of its proper cause. As for instance, it is usual and natural for a man meeting his enemy upon full advantage, to prosecute that advantage against him, and by no means to let him escape; yet sometimes it falls out quite otherwise. Esau had conceived a mortal grudge and enmity against his brother Jacob, yet as soon as he meets him, he falls upon him in a very different way from that of enemies, and embraces him. Ahab having upon conquest got Benhadad, his inveterate enemy, into his hands, not only spares his life, but treats him kindly and lets him go. That a brother unprovoked should hate, and a stranger not obliged should love, is against the usual actings of the heart of man, yet thus it was with Joseph, and no doubt with many others. In which and the like cases, I conceive, things so falling out, may be said to come to pass by an extraordinary act of providence; it being manifest, that the persons concerned in them do not act as men of the same principles and interests under the same circumstances use to do. For interest, we say, will not lie, nor make a man false to himself, whatsoever it may make him to others.

2. Providence may be said to act extraordinarily, when a thing falls out beside or contrary to the design of expert, politic, and shrewd persons, contriving or acting in it. As when a man by the utmost of his wit and skill projects the compassing of such or such a thing, fits means to his end, lays antecedents and consequents directly and appositely for the bringing about his purpose; but in the issue and result finds all broken and baffled, and the

event contrary to his intention; and the order of causes and councils so studiously framed by him, to produce an effect opposite to and destructive of the design driven at by those means and arts. In this case also, I say, we may rationally acknowledge an extraordinary act of providence; forasmuch as the man himself is made instrumental to the effecting of something perfectly against his own will and judgment, and that by those very ways and methods which in themselves were the most proper to prevent, and the most unlikely to bring to pass such an event: the world all the while standing amazed at it, and the credit of the politician sinking; for that nothing seems to cast so just a reproach even upon reason itself, as for persons noted for it to act as notably against it.

3. And lastly, Providence may be said to act in an extraordinary way, when a thing comes to pass visibly and apparently beyond the power of the cause immediately employed in it. As that a man dumb all his life before, should on the sudden speak, as it is said that the son of Cræsus did, upon the sight of a murder ready to have been committed upon the person of his prince and father. That a small company should rout and scatter an army; or, in the language of the scripture, that "one should chase a hundred, and a hundred put ten thousand to flight." That persons of mean parts and little or no experience should frustrate and overreach the counsels of old, beaten, and through-paced politicians. These effects, I say, are manifestly above the ability and stated way of working belonging to the causes from whence they flow. Nevertheless such things are sometimes seen upon the great stage of the world, to the wonder and astonishment of the beholders, who are wholly unable by the common method and discourses of reason to give a satisfactory account of these strange phenomena, by resolving them into any thing visible in their immediate agents: in which case therefore, I conceive that the whole order and connexion of these things one with another, may be reckoned an act of Providence extraordinary.

And thus much for the first general thing proposed, which was to show upon what account the works of providence come to be thus distinguished; which consideration it will be easy for every one to make application of to the ensuing particulars. I proceed now to the

II. General thing proposed: which is to show *how and by what means God does after such an extraordinary manner save and deliver princes.*

I shall mention seven.

1. By endowing them with a more than ordinary sagacity and quickness of understanding above other men. Kings, they say, have a long reach with their arm, but they have a further with

their mind. In 1 Kings iv. 29, God is said to have given Solomon "largeness of heart, even as the sand on the sea-shore;" and in Prov. xxv. 5, the heart of kings is said to be unsearchable. In the former text the royal mind is compared to the sand on the sea-shore for compass, and in this latter it may seem to vie with the sea itself for depth. And does not this day's solemnity give us an eminent proof of this? for when this horrid conspiracy, contrived in hell and darkness, was conveyed to one of the confederates under the shelter of an equivocal writing, our apprehensive and quick-scented king presently smoked the ambiguous paper, and sounding the depths of the black intrigue, found that at the bottom of it which few mortals besides, though of the quickest faculties, could have discovered from it: who had not had their conjectures alarmed by some glimmerings of light into that dark project before. Such a piercing judgment does God often give to these his deputies. A judgment which looks into or rather through and through all others, but is looked into by none.

And there is nothing that both adorns and secures a prince comparably to this discerning faculty; for by this, as by a great light kindling many others, he commands the use of the best understandings and judgments throughout his dominions, calling them to his council, and so seeing with their eyes, apprehending and contriving with their heads; all their knowledge and experience, like rivers paying tribute to the ocean, being conveyed into and swallowed up in his royal breast. It is both the safety and felicity of a prince to have a wise council, but it must be his own wisdom which provides him one. Wisdom is a noble quality and not discernible but by itself. It is art that must judge of art; and he who discovers wisdom in another, must do it by the idea he first had of it in his own brain. Now as the first and chief external safeguard of a prince is in his council; and as it is his discerning faculty which must furnish him with this; so his next safety is in the choice of his friends; and it is the same discerning faculty which must secure him here too; for it is this that must distinguish between friendship and flattery, the most baneful mischief that can be practised by one man upon another; and shadows do not more inseparably follow bodies, than flattery does the persons of great men. Flatterers are the bosom enemies of princes, laying trains for them, not at all less destructive than that which was discovered this day; contriving their ruin acceptably, pleasingly, and according to their own heart's desire. Poison has frequently destroyed kings, but none has been so efficaciously mortal as that drank in by the ear. He who meets his enemy in the field knows how to encounter him, but he who meets him at his table, in his chamber, or in his closet, finds his enemy got within him, before he is aware of him, killing him with smiles and kisses, and acting the assassinate

under the masquerade of a counsellor or a confident: the surest, but the basest way of destroying a man.

But now, it is the prince's wisdom and discerning spirit that must be his rescue from the plots of this friendly traitor. It is a most remarkable speech of Solomon, Prov. xx. 8, that "the king sitting on the throne of judgment, scattereth away all evil with his eye." And the nature of this evil is peculiarly such, that to discover is to defeat it. It is a work of darkness which the light never looks upon, but it scatters too.

Nothing is so notable in the royal bird, the eagle, as the quickness of his eye. The sight is the sense of empire and command; that which is always first and leads the way in every great action; for so far as a prince sees, so far properly he rules; and while he keeps his eye open and his breast shut, he cannot be surprised.

And thus much for the first way by which Providence saves and delivers princes; namely by endowing them with a more than ordinary sagacity and quickness of understanding above other men.

2. God saves and delivers sovereign princes by giving them a singular courage and presence of mind in cases of difficulty and danger. As soon as ever the sacred oil had anointed Saul king, it is said, 1 Sam. x. 9, that "God gave him another heart." That is, a great and a kingly spirit, raising his thoughts above the common level and designs of a private condition. And a little after, when there was a general consternation over all Israel, upon the invasion of the Ammonites, though the report of it met Saul in his former mean employment, coming from the field after his father's herd; yet it is said in the 11th chapter of the same book and ver. 6, that "the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard these tidings." That is the royal spirit, which he had received at his anointing, then began to stir and act, and flame out like itself; taking him presently from following a herd, and putting him at the head of an army. It is incredible to consider the motion of some minds upon the sudden surprise of danger; and how much in such cases some will even outact themselves. How much quicker their wit is to invent, and courage to execute, than at other times. Tullus Hostilius, in the midst of a battle surprised with the treachery of Metius Sufferius falling off with a great part of his army to the enemy, cries out to his soldiers that it was by his order, and thereby confirmed their hearts from fainting through the apprehension of treachery, into a present and glorious victory by their supposing it a contrived stratagem.

Next to wisdom the greatest gift of Heaven is resolution. It is that which gives and obtains kingdoms, that turns swords into sceptres, that crowns the valiant with victory, and the victorious often with a diadem. It was answered by a neighbouring prince to one alleging a flaw in the title of Henry VII. to the

kingdom of England, that he had three of the best titles to his kingdom of any prince living; being the wisest prince, the valiantest prince, and the richest prince in Christendom.

Presence of mind to get out of a plunge, and upon a sudden to unravel the knots and intricacies of a perplexed business, argues a head and a heart made for great things. It is a kind of ecstasy and inspiration, a beam of divine light darting in upon reason, and exalting it to a pitch of operation beyond its natural and accustomed measures; and perhaps there was never any person in the world remarkably and heroically great, without some such kind of enthusiasm; that is, such a mighty principle, as at certain times raised him up to strange unaccountable heights of wit and courage. And therefore whosoever he is, who in the strength of such a spirit can look the most menacing dangers in the face, and when the state of all things about him seems desperate, can yet bear his great heart above despair, such a one for the most part makes fortune itself bend and fall down to him, difficulties vanish, and dangers fly before him; so much is victory the claim of the valiant, and success the birthright of the bold. And this is the second way by which Providence gives salvation unto kings.

3. God saves and delivers sovereign princes, by disposing of events and accidents in a strange concurrence for their advantage and preservation. Nothing indeed is or can be properly accidental to God; but accidents are so called in respect of the intention or expectation of second causes; when things fall out beside their knowledge or design. And there is nothing in which Providence so much triumphs over, and, as I may so say, laughs at the profoundest wisdom of men, as in the stable, certain knowledge and disposal of all casual events: in respect of which the clearest mortal intellect is wholly in the dark. And upon this account, as loose as these events seem to hang upon one another, yet they are all knit and linked together in a firm chain, and the highest link of that chain, as the poets speak most truly and philosophically (though in a fable) is fastened to Jupiter's chair; that is, it is held and managed by an unerring providence: the chain indeed may wave and shake this way and that way, but still the hand that holds it is steady, and the eye that guides it infallible.

Now nothing has so powerful an influence upon the great turns of affairs, and the lives and fortunes of great persons, as the little, unobserved, unprojected events of things. For could any thing be greater than the preservation of a great prince and his next heir to the crown, together with his nobles and the chief of his clergy, from certain, imminent, and prepared destruction? And was not all this effected by a pitiful small accident in the mistake of the superscription of a letter? Did not the oversight of one syllable preserve a church and a state too? And might it not be truly said of that contemptible paper, that it did *Cæsarem vehere*

et fortunam Cæsaris, and that the fate of three kingdoms was wrapped and sealed up in it?

A little error of the eye, a misguidance of the hand, a slip of the foot, a starting of a horse, a sudden mist, or a great shower, or a word undesignedly cast forth in an army, has turned the stream of victory from one side to another, and thereby disposed of the fortunes of empires and whole nations. No prince ever returns safe out of a battle, but may remember how many blows and bullets have gone by him,* that might as easily have gone through him, and by what little, odd, unforeseeable chances death has been turned aside, which seemed in a full, ready, and direct career to have been posting to him. All which passages, if we do not acknowledge to have been guided to their respective ends and effects by the conduct of a superior and a divine hand, we do by the same assertion cashier all providence, strip the Almighty of his noblest prerogative, and make God not the governor, but the mere spectator of the world. And thus much for the third way.

4. The fourth way by which God saves and delivers sovereign princes, is by wonderfully inclining the hearts and wills of men to a benign affection towards them. Hearts and wills are things that princes themselves cannot command, and yet the only things in the strength of which they do command. For the heart is the grand spring of action, and he who governs that part does by consequence command the whole. But now, this is the incommunicable prerogative of God, who, and who only, can either by power or by knowledge reach the heart. For as it is said, Prov. xxi. 1, that "the heart of the king is in God's hand, and that as the rivers of water he turneth it which way soever he will;" so are the hearts of the people too; which like a mighty stream or torrent he turns this way or that way, according to the wise counsels of his providence. For if he intends to advance a prince, they shall be a stream to bear him up from sinking; if to forsake or ruin a prince, they shall overflow, and swell, and rush in upon him with such a furious ungoverned tide, as no power or arts of state shall be able to divert or to withstand. God can turn the hearts of a nation suddenly and irresistibly. He has done so more than once or twice, and may do so again.

Thus for instance, when David fled before Absalom, and was forced to leave the royal city, it was the general affection of his people (God touching their hearts) which brought him back and resettled him in his throne; so that in 2 Sam. xix. 14, it is said of him, that "he bowed the hearts of all the men of Judah even

* See a late signal instance of this in a prince, "who had his shoulder so kindly kissed by a cannon bullet" (as the late archbishop, by a peculiar strain of rhetoric, expresses this wonderful passage in his sermon at court, upon Jeremiah ix. 23, 24, p. 341). For well indeed might it pass for wonderful; the salutes from the mouth of a cannon being commonly so boisterous, that they seldom kiss, but they kill too.

as the heart of one man; so that they sent this word unto the king, Return thou and all thy servants." And just such another message did the lords and commons of England send our banished David in the year sixty. For what was it else which so gloriously restored the king? Plots were nothing, and foreign assistance less than nothing. It was a universal, invincible current of the people's wills and affections, that bore down all those mountains of opposition, which so many years had been raised up against him, and at length, in spite of guilt and malice, brought him in free and unshackled, absolute and victorious over the heads of his armed enemies. It was his people's hearts which made their hands useless to his restoration.

On the other side, when the greatest part of the kingdom was rent from the house of David, and transferred to Jeroboam, in 1 Kings xii. 14, the prophet expressly tells them that this thing was from God: that is, he by a secret overruling energy upon the hearts and affections of the people, took them off from one, and inclined and carried them over to the other. And it is often by this alone, that the great Lord of lords and controller of monarchs putteth down one and setteth up another. He can raise armies of hearts to drive any king out of his kingdom without striking a stroke; as on the contrary, where he intends to own and support the royal estate of any monarch, he shall set him up a throne in every one of his subjects' breasts. So that according to that scripture expression, "their desire shall be to him, and he shall rule over them." And certainly, where affection binds, allegiance must needs be very easy; and a pleasant thing to rule, where there is no heart to resist.

5. God saves and delivers sovereign princes by rescuing them from unseen and unknown mischiefs prepared against them. This is most evident: for if a prince's own observation can bear witness to many deliverances vouchsafed him by Providence, Providence itself can certainly bear witness to many more, which he is wholly ignorant of. Forasmuch as in every man, but especially in princes, their concerns reach further and carry a wider compass than their knowledge can: it being impossible that any man living should know all that is spoken or done concerning him, and consequently be aware of all the mischievous blows levelled against him. How many secret cabals and plots have been against the reputation, the interest, and sometimes the life also of every considerable person in the world, which never yet came to their eye, or their ear, nor (thanks to the care of a guarding Providence) ever troubled so much as a thought, nor hurt so much as a hair of their head? And yet the contrivers of them have wanted neither will, nor wit, nor power (the natural force of causes considered) to add execution to intention, and to give fire to their trains, and efficacy to their cursed projects, had not an invisible, overswaying power baffled and disap-

pointed all the artifices of their malice, and stifled the base conception before the birth.

And this is a way of deliverance so eminent for the mercy of it, that if a prince or great person can be obliged to Providence for any, it must be for this. For when a man knows the danger he is in, all his senses quickly take the alarm, call up the spirits, and arm his courage to meet the approaching evil, and to defend himself. But when he knows nothing of the impending mischief, he lies open and defenceless, like a man bound, and naked, and sleeping, while a dagger is directed to his breast. And for a merciful tender Providence then to step in to his assistance, to ward off the fatal blow, and to turn the approaching edge from his unguarded heart, this surely is the height of mercy, and engrosses the glory of the deliverance wholly to the divine goodness, without allowing any mortal wit or courage the least share or concurrence in it. No prince can tell what the discontents of ill subjects, the emulation of neighbour states or princes have been designing, endeavouring, and projecting against him: all which counsels, by a controlling power from above, have from time to time been made abortive and frustraneous. Let princes therefore reckon upon this, and know assuredly, that they stand indebted to Providence for more deliverances than they can know. And if the protecting mercies of heaven thus surpass their knowledge, surely it is but reason that their sense of them and gratitude for them should surmount expression.

¶ 6. God saves and delivers sovereign princes by imprinting a certain awe and dread of their persons and authority upon the minds of their subjects. And there is not any one thing which seems so manifestly to prove government a thing perfectly divine, both as to its original and continuance in the world, as this. For what is there in any one mortal man, that can strike a dread into, and command a subjection from so many thousands, as every prince almost has under his government, should things be rated according to the mere natural power of second causes? For the strength of one man can do nothing against so many; and his wisdom and counsel but little more: and those who are to obey him know so much, and yet for all that they yield him absolute subjection, dread his threatenings, tremble at his frowns, and lay their necks under his feet. Now from whence can all this be, but from a secret work of the divine power, investing sovereign princes with certain marks and rays of that divine image, which overawes and controls the spirits of men they know not how nor why? But yet they feel themselves actually wrought upon and kept under by them, and that very frequently against their will.

And this is that properly which in kings we call majesty, and which, no doubt, is a kind of shadow or portraiture of the divine authority drawn upon the looks and persons of princes, which

makes them commanders of men's fears, and thereby capable of governing them in all their concerns. *Non fero fulgur oculorum tuorum*, is the language of every subject's heart, struck with the awful aspect of a resolute and magnanimous prince. There is a majesty in his countenance that puts lightning into his looks and thunder into his words. In Dan. v. 12, it is said of Nebuchadnezzar, that "God gave him such a majesty, that all people, nations, and languages, trembled before him." When Alexander the Great found his whole army in a mutiny, and resolute not to march forward, but to return to their own country, against any arguments or persuasions that he could use; he leaps down from the place upon which he had been speaking to them,* and arguing with them, and laying hold of thirteen of the most forward and violent mutineers, causes them to be bound hand and foot, in the face of his whole army looking on, and then thrown into the sea. All which this terrible and victorious army, to which he himself owed his greatness, and which but even now was upon such high and daring terms with him, quietly sees and suffers, and with a sneaking abject behaviour return to their tents, as if a lion had charged and chased a flock of sheep into their folds. Nay, the history says further, that they were fearful, and solicitous, and inquisitive, what the king meant to do with the rest of them. By which, and the like passages, kings may see what they are, and what they may do, if they will but own their high office with an equal courage, and be true to that sovereignty and character which God has stamped upon them. Alexander, as great as he was, was but one man: but he was a prince, and as such acted by a commission from heaven, as one of the Almighty's vicegerents, and upon that account able to encounter as well as to lead his army. A king, acting as a king, has all the power of heaven to bear him out; the stars in their courses shall fight for him; the angels are his guards, and the Lord of hosts their captain. And this is the sixth way by which God saves and delivers princes; namely, by the authority and majesty of their persons.

7. In the seventh and last place, God saves and delivers sovereign princes by disposing their hearts to such virtuous and pious courses as he has promised a blessing to; and by restraining them from those ways to which he has denounced a curse. And this is the greatest deliverance of all; as having a prospect upon the felicity of both worlds, and laying a foundation for all other deliverances. For it is this that qualifies and renders a man a subject capable of and fit for a deliverance. King Abimelech was about to do an action that would certainly have drawn death and confusion after it. "Thou art but a dead

* At the same time uttering these words, (so suitable to his kingly mind and courage,) *Jam scietis, et quantum sine rege valeat exercitus, et quid opis in me uno sit.* Quin. Cur. lib. x.

man," says God to him in Gen. xx. 3. But preventing grace snatched him from the brink of destruction, and delivered him from death by restraining him from the sin: "I withheld thee," says God in the sixth verse, "from sinning against me." See the force of princely piety in the person of Hezekiah. God tells him that he should die, and bids him prepare for it. But piety is stronger than death, and reverses the fatal edict. The Assyrians invade his kingdom, and take his fenced cities, but how does he withstand them? Why he puts on sackcloth for his armour, and it was neither the valour nor the number of his troops, but the prayer of Hezekiah, and the irresistible force of a king fighting upon his knees, that routed Sennacherib.

Virtue entitles a prince to all the mercies of heaven, all the favours, all the endearments of Providence. It has a present and a future influence; one upon his person, the other upon his posterity. So that in 1 Kings xi., when God declared his purpose to remove the kingdom from the house of Solomon for all his idolatries and abominations, yet in the thirty-fourth verse he says, "Howbeit I will make him king all the days of his life, for my servant David's sake, because he kept my commandments and my statutes." And in the thirty-second verse he declares that his son after him should have one tribe for his servant David's sake. Nay, the piety of a king diffuses a blessing and a protection upon the whole kingdom: for how often, upon the provocations of Judah, did the memory of David's piety, as it were, disarm the divine vengeance, and interpose between them and the destroying sentence? So that in the second book of Kings, it is said three several times, upon three several remarkable occasions, that God would not destroy Judah and Jerusalem for his servant David's sake. And who knows, but the piety, the virtues, and the Christian sufferings of the late martyred king may be one great preservative of the present peace of this wretched and ungrateful nation? so that when God lately sent his destroying angel with his drawn sword over Poland, Germany, Holland, and other countries, he has looked upon the blood of that royal martyr, shed for the rights and liberties of his kingdoms, and bid the destroying angel pass over England, and draw no more blood there, where the memory of that sacred blood had made such an atonement and expiation, and cried aloud for mercy upon all; even those that shed it not excepted. Certain it is, that the virtues of a prince are a blessing to more than to himself and his family. They are a public seminary of blessings; they are the palladiums and the strong-holds, nay the common stock and the inheritance of the kingdom, and in a word an exchequer that can never be shut up.

And thus much for the second general thing proposed, which was to show the several ways and means, by which God does after such an extraordinary manner save and deliver sovereign princes: all

which, for memory's sake, it may not be amiss to rehearse and sum up in short; as, namely, he delivers them.

1. By endowing them with a more than ordinary sagacity, and quickness of understanding above other men.

2. By giving them a singular courage and presence of mind in cases of difficulty and danger.

3. By disposing of events and accidents in a strange concurrence for their advantage and preservation.

4. By wonderfully inclining the hearts and wills of men to a benign affection towards them.

5. By rescuing them from unseen and unknown mischiefs prepared against them.

6. By imprinting a certain awe and dread of their persons and authority upon the minds of the people.

7. Seventhly and lastly, by disposing their hearts to such virtuous and pious courses, as God has promised a blessing to; and by restraining them from those ways to which he has denounced a curse. And these are the several ways by which Providence "gives salvation unto kings." I now proceed to

III. The third general thing proposed, which is to *show the reason why Providence is so much concerned in the salvation and deliverance of kings*. Which that we may better do, we must know that there are two things by which God supports the societies of mankind, which he will certainly maintain and preserve, as long as he suffers the world to last, and men to live in it; and these are government and religion: which being so, I suppose we need allege no other reason for God's peculiar care over the persons and lives of sovereign princes, if we demonstrate

1. That they are the greatest instruments in the hand of Providence to support government and civil society in the world. And

2. That they have the most powerful influence upon the concerns of religion, and the preservation of the church, of all other persons whatsoever.

And first for the first of these, That kings are the greatest instruments in the hand of Providence to support government and civil society in the world; the proof of which I conceive will be fully made out by these two things:

(1.) By showing that monarchy, or kingly government, is the most excellent, and best adapted to the ends of government and the benefit of society. And

(2.) That the greatness or strength of a monarch depends chiefly upon the personal qualifications of the prince or monarch.

(1.) And first let us show, that monarchy or kingly government is the most excellent, and best adapted to the ends of government and the benefit of society. This is too large and noble a subject to be fully managed in such a discourse. At present

let it suffice to say, that monarchy in the kind of government is the first, and consequently the most perfect of all other sorts. It is an image of the divine supremacy, man's imitation of Providence, a copy of God's government of the universe in a lesser draught. For the world has but one sovereign ruler, as well as but one maker; and every prince is both his lieutenant and his resemblance too. The excellency of any government consists in the natural firmness of its constitution, freeing it from the principles of dissolution. And the dissolution of government, as of most other things, proceeds chiefly from the internal fightings and conflicts of contrary parts. But now unity excludes contrariety, and that which is but one, cannot disagree or jar with itself. It is multitude only that admits of the contests of particulars, and a commonwealth, where governors cannot govern themselves. That which like a worm eats out the very heart of government is the emulation, the ambition, and the discord of the parties invested with it. But the supremacy placed in one, cuts off all these: for no man is his own rival, no man envies himself, or designs to trip up his own heels, whatsoever he may chance to do.

And to show the naturalness of monarchy, all other forms of government insensibly partake of it, and slide into it. For look upon any aristocracy or democracy, and still you shall find some one ruling active person amongst the rest, who does every thing, and carries all before him. Was not De Wit amongst our neighbours a kind of king in a commonwealth? And was not that usurper here amongst ourselves a monarch in reality of fact, before he wore the title or assumed the office? Moreover, when any commonwealth is forced to defend itself by war, it finds it necessary to appoint one general over all, as this very commonwealth found to its cost, and to make the conduct of its armies at least monarchical. Nay, the Romans themselves, in their greatest exigencies of state, had recourse to their dictatorship, which was a perfect monarchy for the time. And when they sent out their armies under the conduct of two consuls, yet those consuls were to command the whole army by turns, one one day, and another another; which was a tacit confession of the necessity of a single conduct for the right management of great affairs. And I think, upon a full survey of the Roman story, we may truly pronounce, that the greatest defeats that were ever given that commonwealth, in any lasting war, have been from this, that the custom of shifting consuls every year, hindered the conduct of the whole war from being continued in the hands of one experienced commander. In their wars with Hannibal nothing is more manifest. From all which I infer, that kingly government is the most natural, excellent, and beneficial to society, of all others; and that in every commonwealth (in spite of its constitution) there will be something of monarchy; and that if a republic ever achieves any thing great or considerable, it is still by virtue of something in it that is monarchical.

(2.) The next thing is to show, that the greatness or strength of a monarchy depends chiefly upon the personal qualifications of the prince or monarch. It ebbs or flows according to the rising or falling of his spirit. For still it is the person that makes the place considerable, and not the place him. And we shall find in every government, that the activity and bravery of the prince is the soul politic which animates and upholds all. When Alexander the Great died, the Grecian monarchy expired with him. He was both the emperor and the empire too. And after the death of Julius and Augustus Cæsar, those great commanding souls, the Roman empire declined every day, falling into the hands of brutes and sots, who could scarce wield the weight of their own bellies, and much less the burthen of such vast dominions. The present grandeur of the papacy is entirely owing to the prudence and governing arts of some of the popes; and it never suffered any great blow, but when a weak or a voluptuous person sat in the chair. And here amongst ourselves, both the protector and the new protectorship died in one man, though the name indeed survived a while in another; and it was quickly seen, how ridiculous it was for any one to attempt to succeed into his power, who could not succeed into his spirit.

But it is evident from reason, that the fate and fortune of governments must naturally follow the personal abilities of the governor: for what is there else that the strength of a kingdom can be supposed to lean upon, but one of these three—its treasure, its military power, or its laws? But now, none of all these can signify any thing, where the prince is not endued with that royal skill that is requisite to the due management of them. For surely the bare image of a prince upon the coin of any nation can neither improve or employ the treasure of it; nor can the military force of a kingdom do much to strengthen it, should the prince either wear a padlock upon his sword, or draw it in defence of his enemies. Nor lastly, can the laws much contribute to the support of it, if the execution of them be either neglected or discountenanced: for it is not how laws are made, nor how they are interpreted, but how they are used, that must influence the public. By all which we see what moment there is in the sole person of a prince. For as he is qualified or disposed, so all these great things become helpful or ineffectual. The treasure, arms, and laws of a nation are all virtually in him. And it is he who must breathe life and efficacy into them all. Which is the first great reason why God extends such a particular providence over the persons of kings; namely, because the main concerns of civil government and society, which Providence so much tenders the preservation of, are principally deposited in them.

2. The other great reason is, because princes have the most powerful influence upon the concerns of religion, and the preservation of the church, of all other persons whatsoever. Religion

is indeed an immortal seed, and the church is proof against the very gates of hell, as being founded upon a promise, and so standing fast in the eternal strength of God's veracity. Nevertheless, as to its outward state and circumstances in this world it must clasp about the secular power, and as that frowns or smiles upon it, so it must droop or flourish. Accordingly God has declared kings to be nursing fathers of his church: and every prince by the essential inherent right of his crown is or should be a defender of the faith. He holds it by charter from heaven, long before the pope's donation, who never gives any thing to princes but what was their own before. Every Christian king is within his own dominions the great pastor, both to rule Christ's flock and to see it fed, though he does not feed it himself.

We know how glorious a deliverance our church received this day; and it was by the wisdom of that head which wore the crown, that God vouchsafed it to her. King and church then (as it is seldom otherwise) were both designed to the same fate. But God preserved the king, and the king the church. And who knows but for such a day as this, God paved his way before him in such a peaceable entrance into the English throne, so much above and against the expectation of the world round about him, and of the court of Rome especially; which, it is well known, had other designs upon the anvil at that time. And as he then saved the church from perishing by one blow, so he afterwards supported it from dying gradually, either by the encroachments of superstition, or the attempts of innovation.

And it is observable (which I speak not in flattery, but in a profound sense of a blessing which the whole kingdom can never be thankful enough for) that none of the families that ever reigned over this nation, have to their power been so careful and tender of the church, kept their hands so clean from any thing that might look like sacrilege, been so zealous of its privileges, and so kind to its ministers, as the royal family that now sways the sceptre in the succession of three several princes. And I doubt not but as sacrilege has blasted the mightiest families with a curse, so the abhorrence of it will and must perpetuate a blessing upon this.

And thus having dispatched the several heads at first proposed, and shown upon what accounts the actings of God's providence may be said to be extraordinary; and by what ways and means this extraordinary providence saves and delivers princes; as also the reasons why it does so; I proceed now to

IV. The fourth and last thing proposed: which is to make some useful deductions from what has been delivered; and it shall be by way of information concerning two things.

1. The duty and behaviour of princes towards God.
2. The duty and behaviour of subjects towards their prince.

1. And first for that of princes towards God. It shows them from whom, in their distress, they are to expect, and to whom, in their glory, they are to ascribe, all their deliverances. David was as great a warrior and as valiant a prince as ever reigned. In all his wars, success waited upon his courage, and victory did homage to his sword; yet he tells us that he would neither trust in his sword nor in his bow, nor in the alliance of princes. All auxiliaries but those from above he found weak, fickle, and fallacious. And as princes are to own their great deliverer, so are they to show the world that they do so, by setting a due estimate upon the deliverance; especially when it is shown in so signal an instance as that which we now commemorate. And whosoever he is, who really and cordially values any notable deliverance vouchsafed him by God, surely above all things it will concern him, not to court the mischief from which he has been delivered. But

2. Which most properly belongs to us, we learn from the premises the duty and behaviour of subjects towards their princes. Does not God by such a protecting providence over kings point out to us the sacredness of their persons? and command a reverence where he himself thinks fit to place an honour? Does not every extraordinary deliverance of a prince carry this inscription upon it in the brightest characters, "Touch not mine anointed?" Whom God has placed upon the throne, shall any human power presume to drag to the bar? or shall royal heads be crowned and anointed, only to prepare them to be sacrificed upon a scaffold?

As for our parts, when we reflect upon our prince, signalized by so many strange unparalleled rescues, ought they not both to endear him to our allegiance, and in a manner consecrate him to our veneration? For is not this he, whom in the loins of his royal progenitor God by this day's mercy (as I may so say) delivered before he was born? He, for whose sake God has since wrought so many miracles? covering his head in the day of battle, and, which is more, securing it after battle, when such a price was set upon it? Is not this he, whom the same Providence followed into banishment, and gave him safety and honour, where he had not so much as to lay his head, or to set his foot upon, that he could call his own? Is not this he, whom God brought back again by a miracle as great as that by which he brought Israel out of Egypt, not dividing, but, as it were, drying up a Red Sea before him? Is not this he, whom neither the plots of his enemies at home, nor the united strength of those abroad, have been able to shake or supplant? And lastly, is not this he, whom neither the barbarous injuries of his rebel subjects at home, nor the temptations of foreign princes abroad, nor all the arts of Rome besides, could in his greatest extremity bring over to the Romish profession; but that after all he returned.

and since his return still continues in the same communion which he was in when he went from us? *Carolus a Carolo*, firm and immoveable like the son of a father who could rather part with his crowns, kingdoms, and his very life, than quit his honour or give up his religion.

For all which glorious things done for him and by him, may the same God who has hitherto delivered him, order his affairs so that he may never need another deliverance, but that he may grow old in peace and honour; and be as great as the love of his friends and the fears of his enemies can make him; commanding the hearts of the one, in spite of the hearts of the other; and, in a word, continue to reign over us, till mortality shall be swallowed up of immortality, and a temporal crown changed into an eternal.

Which God of his infinite mercy grant; to whom be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON V.

THE SCRIBE INSTRUCTED, &c.

[Preached before the University, at St. Mary's, Oxford, July 29, 1660; being the time of the King's commissioners meeting there, soon after the Restoration, for the visitation of that University.]

MATTHEW XIII. 52.

Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasury things new and old.

IN this chapter we have a large discourse from the great preacher of righteousness; a discourse fraught with all the commending excellencies of speech; delightful for its variety, admirable for its convincing quickness and argumentative closeness, and (which is seldom an excellency in other sermons) excellent for its length.

For that which is carried on with a continued unflagging vigour of expression can never be thought tedious, nor consequently long. And Christ, who was not only the preacher, but himself also the word, was undoubtedly furnished with a strain of heavenly oratory far above the heights of all human rhetoric whatsoever: his sermons being of that grace and ornament, that (as the world generally goes) they might have prevailed even without truth, and yet pregnant with such irresistible truth, that the ornament might have been spared; and indeed it still seems to have been used rather to gratify than persuade the hearer. So that we may (only with a reverential acknowledgment both of the difference of the persons and of the subject) give that testimony of Christ's sermons, which Cicero, the great master of the Roman eloquence, did of Demosthenes' orations, who being asked, which of them was the best, answered, the longest.

Accordingly, our Saviour having in the verse here pitched upon for my text, finished his foregoing discourse, he now closes up all with the character of a preacher, or evangelist; still addressing himself to his disciples, as to a designed seminary of preachers; or rather, indeed, as to a kind of little itinerant academy (if I may so call it) of such as were to take his heavenly doctrines for the sole rule of their practice, and his excellent way of preaching for the standing pattern of their imitation; thus lying at the feet of their blessed Lord, with the humblest atten-

tion of scholars, and the lowest prostration of subjects. The very name and notion of a disciple implying, and the nature of the thing itself requiring, both these qualifications.

Now the discussion of the words before us shall lie in these following particulars:

1. To show, What is here meant by the "scribe."

2. What by being "instructed unto the kingdom of heaven." And

3. And lastly, What by "bringing out of his treasure things new and old;" and how upon this account he stands compared to a householder. And

1. Concerning the word *scribe*. It was a name which amongst the Jews was applied to two sorts of officers.

(1.) To a civil; and so it signifies a notary, or in a large sense any one employed to draw up deeds or writings. Whether in a higher station or degree, as we read in 2 Kings xxii. 3, that Shaphan was γραμματεὺς βασιλέως, the king's scribe, or secretary; or, in a lower sense and acceptance of the word, we find this appellation given to that officer who appeared in quelling the uproar at Ephesus, as we read in Acts xix., where in the 35th verse he is called γραμματεὺς, which I think we may fitly enough render, as our English text does, the "town clerk," or public notary of the city. To this sort also some would refer those mentioned in Matt. ii. 4, who are there called "the scribes of the people;" as if they were such notaries as we have been speaking of; but the business about which we read in that chapter that Herod called them together, seems to evince the contrary; which was to inquire of such as were skilled in the writings of the prophets, when and where the Messiah was to be born. The resolution of which was very unlikely to be had from those who were only notaries and journey-men to courts, to draw up indictments bonds, leases, contracts, and the like. And from whence we may, no doubt, conclude, that this sort of scribes was quite of another nature from the scribe here alluded to in the text; and which shall be next treated of; and therefore,

(2.) This name *scribe* signifies a church officer, one skilful and conversant in the law, to interpret and explain it. For still we find the scribes reckoned with the great doctors of the Jewish church, and for the most part joined with the Pharisees in the writings of the evangelists, and by St. Paul with "the disputer of this world," 1 Cor. i. 20, and sometimes called also νομικοί, "lawyers," as in St. Luke vii. 30, and in St. Luke xi. 52, that is to say, men skilful and expert in the Mosaic law. Not that these scribes were really and properly any part of the Pharisees, as some have thought: for *Pharisee* was the name of a sect, *scribe* of an office; and whereas we read in Acts xxiii. 9, of the γραμματεῖς, there said to be τοῦ μέρους τῶν Φαρισαίων, "of part of the Pharisees?" the word *of part* is not to be understood in respect

of distribution, as it signifies a correlate to the whole, but in respect of opinion; as that they were of the Pharisees' part or side, or, in other words, joined with them in some of their opinions; as possibly others of them might join with the Sadducees in some of theirs. By *scribe* therefore must be here meant a doctor or expounder of the law to the people; such a one as Ezra, that excellent person, so renowned amongst the Jews; who in Ezra vii. 6, is said to have been "a ready scribe in the law of Moses." For though, indeed, the word *scribe* in the English and Latin imports barely a writer, and the Greek γραμματεὺς, by its derivation from γράφω, strictly signifies no more; yet by its nearer derivation from γράμμα, which signifies a letter, it seems to represent to us the nature of the office from the notation of the name, viz. that these scribes were men of the bare letter, or the text; whose business it was to explain and give the literal sense and meaning of the law. And therefore, that the men here spoken of, whom the Jews accounted of such eminent skill in it, should by their office be only writers or transcribers of it, can with no more reason, I think, be affirmed, than if we should allow him to be a skilful divine, who should transcribe other men's works, and, which is more, preach them when he had done. But

2. As for the meaning of that expression, of being "instructed unto the kingdom of heaven." By the kingdom of heaven is here signified to us only the preaching of the gospel, or the condition and state of the church under the gospel; as "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," that is, the gospel is shortly to be preached. Now we are to take notice, that it was the way of Christ in his preaching to the Jews, to express the offices and things belonging to his church under the gospel, by alluding to those of the Jewish church under the law, as being known and familiar to them. Hence he calls a minister, or preacher of the gospel, a scribe; and this from the analogy of what the scribe did in the explication of the Mosaic law, with what the gospel minister was to do, in preaching and pressing home the doctrines of Christianity upon the heart and conscience; much the harder work (God knows) of the two.

Now the word which we here render "instructed," in the Greek is μαθητευθείς, one who was taught, schooled, or disciplined to the work by long exercise and study. He was not to be inspired or blown into the ministry, but to come to it by mature study and labour. He was to fetch his preparations from industry, not infusion. And forasmuch as Christ's design was to express evangelical officers by legal, there must (as I show) be some resemblance between them; and since the matter or subject they were engaged in was wholly diverse, this resemblance was to hold, at least, in the qualification of the persons, viz. That as the scribe of the law did with much labour stock himself with all

variety of learning requisite to find out the sense of the same, so the evangelical scribe, or preacher, should bring as much learning, and bestow as much labour in his employment, as the other did in his; especially since it required full as much, and deserved a great deal more. And so we pass to the

3. Thing proposed, which was to show what is to be understood by "bringing out of his treasure things new and old." By treasure is here signified that, which in Latin is called *penus*, a storehouse, or repository; and the bringing out thence things new and old was, as some are of opinion, a kind of proverb or proverbial speech among the Hebrews, expressing a man's giving a plentiful or liberal entertainment to his friends, and such as came about him. And accordingly, as here borrowed from the householder, and applied to the gospel scribe in the text, it makes the drift and import of the whole parable to amount to this; that as the former, if a man of substance and sufficiency, of a large stock and as large a mind, will entertain his friends and guests with plenty and variety of provision, answerable to the difference of men's palates, as well as to the difference of the season; not confining them to the same standing common fare, but, as occasion requires, adding something of more cost and rarity besides; so our gospel scribe, or preacher, in the entertainment of his spiritual guests, is not always to set before them only the main substantial of religion, whether for belief or practice, but as the matter shall require, to add also illustration to the one, and enforcement to the other, sometimes persuading, sometimes terrifying; and accordingly addressing himself to the afflicted and desponding with gospel lenitives, and to the hard and obstinate with legal corrosives; and since the relish of all is not the same, he is to apply to the vulgar with plain familiar similitudes, and to the learned with greater choiceness of language and closeness of argument: and moreover, since every age of the church more peculiarly needs the clearer discussions of some truth or other, then more particularly doubted of or opposed; therefore to the inculcating the general acknowledged points of Christianity, he is to add something of the controversies, opinions, and vices of the times; otherwise he cannot reach men's minds and inclinations, which are apt to be argued this way or that way, according to different times and occasions: and consequently he falls so far short of a good orator, and much more of an accurate preacher.

This, I conceive, is the genuine and full sense of the words we are now upon, and which I shall yet further strengthen with this observation: That we shall find that Christ's design all along the Evangelists was to place the economy of the church under the gospel above that of the Jewish church under the law, as more excellent in every particular. Now it was the way of the scribes then to dwell only upon the letter of the law, and what

Moses said; showing the construction, the coherence, and force of his words, only sometimes sprinkling them a little with tradition, and the pompous allegation of their ancient rabbies, Ἐπὶ τῶν τοῖς ἀρχαίοις. But Christ, who (we read) taught with authority, and not as the scribes; as one not only expounding, but also commanding, the words took a freedom of expression in showing not the sense of Moses only, but the further sense and intent of God himself speaking to Moses; and then clothing this sense in parables, similitudes, and other advantages of rhetoric, so as to give it an easier entrance and admission into the mind and affections: and what he did himself, he recommended to the practice of his disciples. So that, I think, we may not unfilily account for the meaning of our Saviour in this chapter thus: you see how the scribes of the law with much anxiety and niceness confine themselves to the letter of Moses, but the scribe who is "instructed unto the kingdom of heaven," and fitted to preach the gospel, must not dwell only upon the letter and shell of things, but often enlarge and amplify upon the subject he handles, adapting his discourse to the various circumstances, tempers, and apprehensions of his hearers; and so letting it rise or fall in the degrees of its plainness or quickness, according to his hearer's dullness or docility.

Thus I hope I have made out the full import of the words, and the design of our Saviour in them, which I shall now more thoroughly prosecute in this proposition, naturally resulting from them so explained, viz.

That the greatest advantages, both as to largeness of natural, and exquisiteness of acquired abilities, are not only consistent with, but required to the due performance of the work and business of a preacher of the gospel.

Not that I affirm that every one, who has not such a furniture of parts and knowledge, is therefore wholly unfit or forbidden to be a preacher; for then most of us might for ever sit down and adore, but not venture upon this work. But in giving a rule for any thing or action, we must assign the utmost perfection which either of them is capable of, and to which men ought to aspire; not to which they of necessity must or can attain. We know the copy always falls short of the original, and the performance of the precept. But still the rule must be absolute and highly perfect; otherwise we should never look upon our improvement as our duty, or our imperfections as our defects.

In the handling of the proposition drawn forth I shall show,

I. What qualifications are required as necessary to a minister of the word, from the force of that comparison between him and the scribe mentioned in the text.

II. I shall show the reasons to evince and prove their necessity: and

III. I shall draw some inferences from the whole.

I. And first concerning *the qualifications required as necessary to a minister of the word.*

I shall bring them under these two.

1. An ability and strength of the powers and faculties of the mind. And

2. An habitual preparation of the same by study, exercise, and improvement.

Which two, I conceive, contain all that both nature and art can do in this matter.

And first, for the first of these two.

1. A natural ability and strength of the powers and faculties of the mind. And what these are is apparent, viz. judgment, memory, and invention.

Now, whether these three are three distinct things both in being distinguished from one another, and likewise from the substance of the soul itself considered without any such faculties, but only receiving these several denominations from the several respects arising from the several actions exerted immediately itself upon several objects, or several qualities of the same object; I say, whether of these two it is, is not easy to decide; and it is well that it is not necessary. Aquinas and most with him affirm the former, and Scotus with his followers the latter. But yet to assert with him, that in a created nature essence and power are the same, seems too near and bold a step to the incommunicable simplicity of the divine: and according to the received way of arguing will pass for a great absurdity. However, not to insist further upon a point merely philosophical, but supposing (at least probably) that according to the common opinion, the soul acts or works by powers and faculties, as well as habits, distinct from its own substance; I proceed now to show the necessity of the three forementioned faculties in the business of the ministry. And,

(1.) For that great leading one, the *judgment*: without which how can any controversy in philosophy or divinity be duly managed, stated, or determined? How can that which is ambiguous be cleared, that which is fallacious be detected, or even truth itself be defended? How, where the words of scripture may bear several senses, some proper, and some figurative, can we be assured, which the writer or speaker of them intended them in? How also, without this, when a scripture has been corrupted, partly by filching some words out of it, and partly by supposititious foisting of some in, shall the whole be rescued from the imposture passed upon it, and so restored true and genuine to itself? And lastly, how shall many seeming clashings and dark passages in sacred history and chronology be placed in such a light, as may thoroughly satisfy, or at least effectually silence, the doubtful and exceptionous? All which particulars, with many more of the like nature, being confessedly knotty and difficult, can never be accorded but by a competent stock of critical learn-

ing; and can any one (even according to the very signification of the word) be said to be a critic, and yet not judicious? And then,

(2.) For *memory*. This may be reckoned twofold. 1. That which serves to treasure up our reading or observations. And 2. That which serves to suggest to us, in our reciting or repeating of any thing which we had endeavoured to commit to our memory before. I distinguish them, because one may be and often is excellent, where the other is deficient. But now, were this never so large, yet theology is of that vast compass, as to employ and exhaust it. For what volumes are there of antiquity, church history, and other divine learning, which well deserve reading; and to what purpose do we read, if we cannot remember? But then also, of the reciting or repeating part of memory, that is so necessary, that Cicero himself observes of oratory (which indeed upon a sacred subject is preaching), that upon the want of memory alone, *omnia, etiamsi præclarissima fuerint, in oratore peritura*.^{*} And we know that to a popular auditory it is upon the matter *all*. There being, in the esteem of many, but little difference between sermons read, and homilies, save only this, that homilies are much better. And then for the

(3.) Third faculty, which is *invention*. A faculty acting chiefly in the strength of what is offered it by the imagination. That is so far from being admitted by many as necessary, that it is decried by them as utterly unlawful; such grand exemplars I mean, as make their own abilities the sole measure of what is fit or unfit, lawful or unlawful; so that when they themselves cannot reach, others, forsooth, ought not to attempt. But I see not why divinity should suffer from their narrowness, and be deprived of the service of a most useful and excellent endowment of the mind, and which gives a gloss and a shine to all the rest. For I reckon upon this as a great truth, that there can be no endowment in the soul of a man, which God himself is the cause and giver of, but may even in its highest and choicest operations be sanctified and employed in the work of the ministry. And there is also another principle, which I account altogether as true as the former; namely, that piety engages no man to be dull; though lately, I confess, it passed with some for a mark of regeneration. And when I shall see these principles disproved, I shall be ready to grant all exercise of the fancy or invention, in the handling things sacred, to be unlawful. As fancy, indeed, is often taken in the worst sense for a conceited, curious, whimsical brain, which is apt to please itself in strange, odd, and ungrounded notions; so I confess that nothing is more contrary to, or destructive of true divinity; but then I must add withal, that if fancy be taken in this sense, those who damn it in its other sober and right acceptation, have much the greatest share of it

^{*} Primo libro de Oratore.

themselves. But if, on the other hand, we take fancy for that power or ability of the mind, which suggests apposite and pertinent expressions, and handsome ways of clothing and setting off those truths which the judgment has rationally pitched upon, it will be found full as useful as any of all the three mentioned by us, in the work of preaching; and consequently slighted and disapproved of by none but such as envy that in others which they are never like to be envied for the want of in themselves. He, therefore, who thinks to be "a scribe instructed for the kingdom of heaven," without a competency of judgment, memory, and invention, attempts a great superstructure where there is no foundation; and this surely is a very preposterous way to edify either himself or others.

And thus much for the first of the two qualifications of our evangelical scribe; to wit, a tolerable ability, or strength of the powers and faculties of the mind; particularly of those three, judgment, memory, and invention. I proceed now to the other, and

2nd Qualification: which was an habitual preparation by study, exercise, and due improvement of the same. Powers act but weakly and irregularly, till they are heightened and perfected by their habits. A well radicated habit, in a lively, vegete faculty, is like "an apple of gold in a picture of silver;" it is perfection upon perfection, it is a coat of mail upon our armour, and, in a word, it is the raising of the soul, at least, one story higher. For take off but these wheels, and the powers in all their operations will drive but heavily. Now it is not enough to have books, or for a man to have his divinity in his pocket or upon the shelf: but he must have mastered his notions, till they even incorporate into his mind, so as to be able to produce and wield them upon all occasions; and not, when a difficulty is proposed and a performance enjoined, to say that he will consult such and such authors: for this is not to be a divine, who is rather to be a walking library than a walking index. As, to go no further than the similitude in the text, we should not account him a good or generous housekeeper, who should not have always something of standing provision by him, so as never to be surprised, but that he should still be found able to treat his friend at least, though perhaps not always presently to feast him. So the scribe here spoken of should have an inward, lasting fulness and sufficiency, to support and bear him up; especially where present performance urges, and actual preparation can be but short. Thus, it is not the oil in the wick, but in the vessel, which must feed the lamp. The former indeed may cause a present blaze, but it is the latter which must give it a lasting light. It is not the spending-money a man has in his pocket, but his hoards in the chest, or in the bank, which must make him rich. A dying man has his breath in his nostrils, but to have it in the lungs is that which must

preserve life. Nor will it suffice to have raked up a few notions here and there, or to rally up all one's little utmost into one discourse, which can constitute a divine, or give a man stock enough to set up with: any more than a soldier who had filled his knapsack should thereupon set up for keeping house. No; a man would then quickly be drained, his short stock would serve but for one meeting in ordinary converse, and he would be in danger of meeting with the same company twice. And therefore there must be store, plenty, and a treasure, lest he turn broker in divinity, and having run the rounds of a beaten exhausted common place, be forced to stand still, or go the same round over again; pretending to his auditors, that it is profitable for them to hear the same truths often inculcated to them; though I humbly conceive, that to inculcate the same truths, is not of necessity to repeat the same words. And therefore to avoid such beggarly pretences, there must be an habitual preparation as to the work we are now speaking of. And that in two respects:

(1.) In respect of the generality of knowledge required to it. The truth is, if we consider that great multitude of things to be known, and the labour and time required to the knowledge of each particular, it is enough to discourage and dash all attempt and cause a careless despair. What Hippocrates said of the cure of the body, is much truer of the cure of the soul, that "life is short, and art long." And I might add also, that the mind is weak and narrow, and the business difficult and large. And should I say, that preaching was the least part of a divine, it would I believe be thought a bold word, and look like a paradox, (as the world goes,) but perhaps, for all that, never the further from being a great truth. For is it not a greater thing to untie the knots of many intricate and perplexing controversies, and to bring together all the ends of a loose and hardly cohering hypothesis? to refute the opinions and stop the mouths of gainsayers, whereas some of them are so opposite among themselves, that you can hardly confute one but with arguments taken from the other, though both of them equally erroneous? In which and the like cases to carry an argument for the defence of truth so warily and exactly, that an adversary shall not sometimes be able to pervert it to the support of an error; (since though the argument may be materially the same, yet the different application and management of it may produce quite different inferences from it,) this, no doubt, is a matter of great difficulty, and no less dexterity. And the like also may be said of casuistical divinity for resolving cases of conscience; especially where several obligations seem to interfere, and, as it were, jostle one another, so that it seems impossible to the conscience to turn either way without sin, and while it does so, must needs be held under great distraction. To clear a way out of which, being a work certainly depending upon much knowledge of the canon and civil laws, as well as of the

principles of divinity, it must needs require much toil and labour for the casuist to provide himself with materials for this purpose, and then no less art and skill to manage and apply them to the conscience. And as it is highly requisite that this should in some measure be found in every divine, and in its height and perfection in some, which since it cannot well be, but by the whole employment of a man's time, not taken off or diverted by other ministerial business, it so far shows the happy constitution of such churches as afford place of suitable scholastic maintenance (without the trouble of a pastoral charge) for such whose abilities carry them to the study of the controversial or critical part of theology, rather than any other belonging to the ministry. But on the contrary, where there is no such proper maintenance allotted for a divine, but by preaching only, let us suppose, that which in such a case we easily may: That one had a peculiar inclination to controversy, or to dive into antiquity, or to search critically into the original letter of the scriptures; and withal had little inclination, and perhaps less ability, to preach, but yet knew no other way to live as a divine, but by preaching; do we not here lose an excellent casuist, an accurate critic, or profound school-divine, only to make a very mean preacher? Who, had he had the forementioned opportunity of encouragement, might have been eminently serviceable to the church in any of those other ways, while he only serves the natural necessities of life in this. And this has been observed by a learned knight,* to have been an inconvenience even in those days when the revenues of the church were not wholly reformed from it; that for our not then setting aside whole societies for the managing of controversies and nothing else, as the church of Rome finds it necessary to do, divines for the most part handle controversies only as a diversion in the midst of their other pastoral labours, and many of them have performed it accordingly. For as a man's faculties will not suffice him for all arts and sciences, so neither will they sometimes reach all the parts and difficulties of any of them. But the late times made the matter yet ten times worse with us, when the rooters and thorough-reformers made clean work with the church, and took away all, and so by stripping the clergy of their rights and preferments, left us in a fair posture, you may be sure, both offensive and defensive, to encounter our acute and learned adversaries the Jesuits. For then the polemics of the field had quite silenced those of the schools. All being taken up and busied, some in pulpits and some in tubs, in the grand work of preaching and holding forth, and that of edification (as the word then went); so that they seemed like an army of men armed only with trowels, and perhaps amongst thousands only a Saul and a Jonathan with swords in their hands, only one or two with scholastic artillery and preparation for controversy. But

* Sir Edwyn Sandys in his *Europæ Speculum*.

this by the way, and as a sad instance to show how fatal it is, that when divinity takes in so large a compass of learning, and that for so many uses, the church should be robbed of the proper and most effectual means of stocking herself with it.

But some perhaps will reply, What needs all this? we are resolved to preach only, and look no further, and for this much reading cannot be requisite, except only for the delivery of our sermons: for we will preach our own experiences. To which I answer, That be this as it may; but yet if these men preach their own experiences, as they call them, without some other sort of reading and knowledge, both their hearers and themselves too, will quickly have more than sufficient experience of their confidence and ridiculous impertinence. But as there are certain mountebanks and quacks in physic, so there are much the same also in divinity, such as have only two or three little experiments and popular harangues to entertain and amuse the vulgar with; but being wholly unacquainted with the solid grounds and rules of science, from whence alone come true sufficiency and skill, they are pitifully ignorant and useless as to any great and worthy purposes; and fit for little else, but to show the world how easily fools may be imposed upon by knaves. And thus much for habitual preparation in point of knowledge, besides which there is required also in the

(2.) Second place, the like preparation as to significant speech and expression. For as I show, that by knowledge a man informs himself, so by expression he conveys that knowledge to others; and as bare words convey, so the propriety and elegance of them give force and facility to the conveyance. But because this is like to have more opposers; especially such as call a speaking coherently upon any sacred subject a blending a man's wisdom with the word, an offering of strange fire; and account the being pertinent, even the next door to the being profane; I say, for their sakes, I shall prove a thing clear in itself by scripture, and that not by arguments or consequences drawn from thence, but by downright instances occurring in it, and those so very plain, that even such as themselves cannot be ignorant of them. For in God's word we have not only a body of religion, but also a system of the best rhetoric: and as the highest things require the highest expressions, so we shall find nothing in scripture so sublime in itself, but it is reached and sometimes overtopped by the sublimity of the expression. And first, where did majesty ever ride in more splendour, than in those descriptions of the divine power in Job, in the 38th, 39th, and 40th chapters? And what triumph was ever celebrated with higher, livelier, and more exalted poetry, than in the song of Moses, in Deut. xxxii.? And then for the passions of the soul; which being things of the highest transport and most wonderful and various operation in human nature, are therefore the proper object and business of

rhetoric: let us take a view how the scripture expresses the most noted and powerful of them. And here, what poetry ever paralleled Solomon in his description of love, as to all the ways, effects, and ecstasies, and little tyrannies of that commanding passion? See Ovid with his *Omnia vincit amor*, &c. And Virgil with his *Vulnus alit venis et cæco carpitur igne*, &c. How jejune and thin are they to the poetry of Solomon, in the 8th chapter of the Canticles, and the 6th verse; "Love is strong as death, and jealousy cruel as the grave." And as for his description of beauty, he describes that so that he even transcribes it into his expressions. And where do we read such strange risings and fallings, now the faintings and languishings, now the terrors and astonishments of despair venting themselves in such high amazing strains, as in Psalm lxxvii.? Or where did we ever find sorrow flowing forth in such a natural prevailing pathos, as in the Lamentations of Jeremy? One would think that every letter was written with a tear, every word was the noise of a breaking heart; that the author was a man compacted of sorrows; disciplined to grief from his infancy; one who never breathed but in sighs, nor spoke but in a groan. So that he, who said he would not read the scriptures for fear of spoiling his style, showed himself as much a blockhead as an atheist,* and to have as small a gust of the elegancies of expression, as of the sacredness of the matter. And shall we now think that the scripture forbids all ornament of speech, and engages men to be dull, flat, and slovenly in all their discourses? But let us look a little further, and see whether the New Testament abrogates what we see so frequently used in the Old? And for this, what means all the parables used by our Saviour, the known and greatest elegancies of speech? so that if this way was unlawful before, Christ by his example has authorized and sanctified it since, and if good and lawful, has confirmed it. But as for the men whom we contend with, I see not why they should exterminate all rhetoric, who still treat of things figuratively, and by the worst of figures too; their whole discourse being one continued *meiosis*, to diminish, lessen, and debase the great things of the gospel infinitely below themselves. Besides that I need not go beyond the very words of the text for an impregnable proof of this: for Christ says, that a "scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven" ought to "bring out of his treasure things new and old." Now I demand; what are the things here to be understood? For as to the matter which he is here to treat of, the articles of the Christian religion are and still must be the same, and therefore there can be no such variety as new and old in them. Wherefore it remains, that this variety can be only in the way of expressing those things. Besides that our Saviour Christ, in these words, particularly relates to the manner of his own preaching, upon occasion

*Politian.

of the very sermon which we find all along this chapter delivered in parables; so that by new and old may probably be meant nothing else, but a plenty of fluent dexterity of the most suitable words and pregnant arguments, to set off and enforce gospel truths. For questionless, when Christ says that a scribe must be stocked with "things new and old," we must not think that he meant, that he should have a hoard of old sermons (whosoever made them), with a bundle of new opinions; for this certainly would have furnished out such entertainment to his spiritual guests, as no rightly disposed palate could ever relish, or stomach bear. And therefore the thing which Christ here drives at, must needs be only variety and copiousness of sacred eloquence.

And thus much for the first of the three general heads proposed by us for the handling these words; which was to show the qualifications necessary for a gospel scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven. And these were two; first, habitual preparation, in point of learning or knowledge; and secondly, the other in point of significant speech or expression; I proceed now to the

II. General head proposed; which was, *to assign the reasons of this their necessity*; and these shall be three.

1. Because the preacher works upon men's minds only as a moral agent, and as one who can do no more than persuade, and not by any physical efficiency. And herein I do not say, that conversion is caused only by moral suasion; for if we consider the strength of our corruption, and how it has insinuated itself into the very principles of nature, and seized upon those powers which are but very little under the command of the intellectual part, I think it cannot be subdued by mere suasion, which in its utmost reaches only to the convincing of that. But the heart must be changed by a much higher power, even by an immediate omnipotent work of God's Spirit infusing a quality into the soul not there before, which by degrees shall weaken and work out our inherent natural corruption; and this being a creating work, is done solely and immediately by God himself, forasmuch as creation admits of no instrument, as being an effect of that infinite creative power, which cannot be conveyed to an instrumental agent.

But you will say then, if conversion be the sole immediate work of God, what need is there of a preacher? And how can he be said to be, as usually he is, God's instrument in the work of a man's conversion; to which I answer, 1. That God's institution of preaching is a sufficient reason for it, though we know no other. 2. That when the preacher is said to be an instrument in the conversion of a sinner, it is not meant that he is such by a properly physical efficiency, but only morally, and by persuasion. I explain my meaning thus. A physical instrument,

or such as is found in natural efficient productions, is that which, partaking of the power, force and causality of the principal agent from thence derived to it, produces a suitable effect. As when I cut or divide a thing, the force of my hand is conveyed to the knife, by virtue of which the knife cuts or divides. And thus, I say, the preacher cannot be the instrument of conversion, for the reason above mentioned; because that infinite power, which does convert, cannot be conveyed to any finite being whatsoever. But a moral instrument is quite of another nature; and is that (as I may so express it) *non quo producente, sed quo interveniente sequitur effectus*. Not that which conversion is effected by, but that without which (ordinarily at least) it is not. So that while the minister is preaching and persuading, God puts forth another secret influence quite different from that of the preacher, though still going along with it; and it is this by which God immediately touches the sinner's heart, and converts him. Howbeit, the preacher is still said to be instrumental in this great work; forasmuch as his preaching is subordinate to, and most commonly (as has been said) accompanies it: God not being pleased to exert his action, but in concurrence with the preacher exerting his. And thus having given God his prerogative, and the preacher his due, by showing how he is morally instrumental to the work of the sinner's conversion by persuading; I infer the necessity of those forementioned abilities and preparations for preaching, as being the most proper means and instruments of persuasion. See this exemplified in St. Paul himself, and in him observe, when he deals with the Jews, how he endeavours to insinuate what he says, by pleading his own kindred with them, speaking honourably of Abraham, and of the law, and calling the gospel the law of faith; and affirming, that it did establish the law. All which was the true art of natural rhetoric, thus to convey his sense under those names and notions, which he knew were highly pleasing to them. But then on the other hand, when he would win over the Gentiles; forasmuch as there was a standing feud between them and the Jews (the Jews, like the men here of late, for ever unsainting all the world besides themselves); observe how he deals with them. He tells them of the rejection of the Jews, and the Gentiles being engrafted in their room: and that Abraham believed unto justification before he was circumcised, and therefore was no less the father of the uncircumcised believers, than of the circumcised. He tells them also, that the believing Gentiles were his spiritual seed, but the Jews, as such, were only his carnal. He takes occasion also to undervalue circumcision and the ceremonial law, as abused by the Jews, and in themselves things most hateful to other nations. Now all this was hugely pleasing to the Gentiles, and therefore very apt to persuade. But had not St. Paul been a man of learning and skill in the art and methods of rhetoric, he could not have suited

such apposite exhortations to such different sorts of men with so much dexterity.

And the same course, in dealing with men's minds, is a minister of the word to take now. As suppose he would dissuade men from any vice, he is to found his dissuasives upon the peculiar temper of the man; so that if, for instance, he should find it needful to preach against drunkenness, and there were several in the congregation addicted to several sorts of vice, as some to pride or ambition, some to covetousness, or the like; here, besides the general argument from the punishments of the other world denounced against these and such other vices; if he would do his business effectually, he must also tell the ambitious or proud man that his drunkenness would disgrace him, and make him the scorn and contempt of all the world about him; and the covetous man, that it would certainly waste his estate, and beggar him. Whereas should he, on the other hand, transplace these arguments, and dissuade him who is proud from drinking, because it would beggar him, and him who is covetous, because it would disgrace him, doubtless he would prevail but little; because his argument would not strike that proper principle which each of them were governed by. And now what can this be grounded upon, but upon natural philosophy, and a knowledge of men's passions and interests, the great and chief springs of all their actions? And upon like ground it is, that for a preacher in his discourses to the people to insist only upon universals, is but a cold, faint, languid way of persuading or dissuading; as to tell men in general, that they are sinners, and that going on in sin without repentance, they are under the curse and wrath of God; all which they think they knew before, and accordingly received it as a word of course, and too slightly regard it. But conviction, the usual forerunner of, and preparative to conversion, is from particulars, as if the preacher should tell his hearers, that he who continues to cheat, cozen, and equivocate, is a wicked and impenitent wretch; and that he who drinks, and swears, and whores, is the person to whom the curse directly belongs: and this seriously urged, and discreetly applied, will, if any thing, carry it home to the conscience, and lodge it there too. And now is not the reason of this method also to be fetched from philosophy, as well as from religion? For we know that men naturally have only a weak confused knowledge of universals, but a clear and lively idea of particulars. And that which gives a clear representation of a thing to the apprehension, makes a suitable impression of it upon the will and affections. Whosoever therefore pretends to be a preacher, must know that his main business is to persuade, and that without the helps of human learning, this can hardly be done to any purpose. So that if he finds himself wholly destitute of these, and has nothing else to trust to, but some groundless, windy, and fantastic notions about the spirit

(the common sanctuary of fanatics and enthusiasts), he would do well to look back, and taking his hand off from this plough to put it to another, much fitter for him. But in the mean time, as for ourselves, who pretend not to a pitch above other mortals, nor dare rely upon inspiration instead of industry, we must rest content to revere the wisdom and follow the examples of those who went before us, and enjoined us the study of the arts and sciences, as the surest and most tried way to that of divinity.

2. A second reason for the necessity of these preparations for the ministry shall be taken from this consideration, That at the first promulgation of the gospel, God was pleased to furnish the apostles and preachers of it with abilities proper for that great work, after a supernatural and miraculous way. For still we find that the scripture represents the apostles as ignorant and illiterate men, and that the chief priests and elders of the Jews took particular notice of them as such, in Acts iv. 13. The text there gives them this character, that they were *ἄνθρωποι ἀγράμματοι, καὶ ἰδιῶται*, that is to say, according to the strict signification of the word, men unlearned, and of a mean and plebeian condition. Nevertheless, since they were appointed by God to preach the gospel to several nations; a work requiring a considerable knowledge of the languages of those nations, and impossible to be performed without it; and yet no less impossible for the apostles, having neither time nor opportunity to acquire that knowledge in the natural, ordinary course of study; God himself supplies this defect, and endues them with all necessary qualifications by immediate and divine infusion. So that being filled with the Holy Ghost, as we read in Acts ii. 4, "they forthwith spoke with other tongues; and that so clearly, plainly, and intelligibly, as both to convince and astonish all who heard them; even those of the most different nations and languages, as well as their own countrymen the Jews themselves. From whence I thus argue: That if the forementioned helps and assistances were not always of most singular use, and sometimes of indispensable necessity to the calling of a divine, certainly the most wise God would never have been at the expense of a miracle, to endow men of that calling with them. For he who observes that order and decorum in all his works, as never to overdo any thing, nor carry on the business of his ordinary providence by extraordinary and supernatural ways, would doubtless (in the eye of the world at least) seem to debase and make cheap those noblest instances of his power, should he ever exert them but where he saw it of the highest concern to his own honour and man's happiness, that something should be done for both, which bare nature, left to itself, could never do.

3. The third and last reason for the necessity of such preparations for the ministry, shall be drawn from the dignity of the subject of it, which is divinity. And what is divinity, but a

doctrine treating of the nature, attributes, and works of the great God, as he stands related to rational creatures; and the way how rational creatures may serve, worship, and enjoy him? And if so, is not the subject-matter of it the greatest, and the design and business of it the noblest in the world, as being no less than to direct an immortal soul to its endless and eternal felicity? It has been disputed to which of the intellectual habits, mentioned by Aristotle, it most properly belongs; some referring it to wisdom, some to science, some to prudence, and some compounding it of several of them together: but those seem to speak most to the purpose, who will not have it formally any one of them, but virtually, and in an eminent transcendent manner, all. And now can we think, that a doctrine of that depth, that height, and that vast compass grasping within it all the perfections and dimensions of human science, does not worthily claim all the preparations whereby the wit and industry of man can fit him for it? All other sciences are but handmaids to divinity; and shall the handmaid be richer adorned, and better clothed and set off, than her lady? In other things, the art usually excels the matter, and the ornament we bestow is better than the subject we bestow it upon: but here we are sure, that we have such a subject before us, as not only calls for, but commands, and not only commands, but deserves our utmost application to it; a subject of that native, that inherent worth, that it is not capable of any addition from us, but shines both through and above all the artificial lustre we can put upon it. The study of divinity is indeed difficult, and we are to labour hard and dig deep for it? but then we dig in a golden mine, which equally invites and rewards our labour.

And thus much for the second general head at first proposed, for the handling of the words: which was to show the reasons of the necessity of the preparations spoken of to the study of divinity. Of which we have assigned three. And so we pass at length to the

III. And last general head proposed, which was to show *what useful inferences may be drawn* from the foregoing particulars. And the first shall be a just and severe reproof to two sorts of men.

1. To such as disparage and detract from the grandeur of the gospel, by a puerile and indecent levity in their discourses of it to the people.

2. To such as depreciate, and as much as in them lies debase the same by a coarse, careless, rude, and insipid way of handling the great and invaluable truths of it.

Both of them certainly objects of the most deserved reproof.

1. For those who disparage and detract from the gospel, by a puerile and indecent sort of levity in their discourses upon it, so

extremely below the subject discoursed of. All vain, luxuriant allegories, rhyming cadencies of similiary words, are such pitiful embellishments of speech, as serve for nothing but to embase divinity; and the use of them, but like the plastering of marble, or the painting of gold, the glory of which is to be seen, and to shine by no other lustre but their own. What Quintilian most discreetly says of Seneca's handling philosophy, that he did *rerum pondera minutissimis sententiis frangere*, break, and as it were emasculate the weight of his subject by little affected sentences, the same may with much more reason be applied to the practice of those who detract from the excellency of things sacred by a comical lightness of expression. As when their prayers shall be set out in such a dress, as if they did not supplicate, but compliment almighty God; and their sermons so garnished with quibbles and trifles, as if they played with truth and immortality; and neither believed these things themselves, nor were willing that others should. For is it possible that a man in his senses should be merry and jocose with eternal life and eternal death, if he really designed to strike the awful impression of either into the consciences of men? No, no: this is no less a contradiction to common sense and reason, than to the strictest notions of religion. And as this can by no means be accounted divinity, so neither indeed can it pass for wit; which yet such chiefly seem to affect in such performances. For these are as much the stains of true human eloquence, as they are the blots and blemishes of divinity; and might be as well confuted out of Quintilian's Institutions, as out of St. Paul's epistles. Such are wholly mistaken in the nature of wit: for true wit is a severe and manly thing. Wit in divinity is nothing else, but sacred truths suitably expressed. It is not shreds of Latin or Greek, nor a *Deus dixit*, and a *Deus benedixit*, nor those little quirks or divisions into the *ὅτι*, the *διότι*, and the *καθότι*, or the *egress*, *regress*, and *progress*, and other such stuff (much like the style of a lease), that can properly be called *wit*. For that is not wit which consists not with wisdom. For can you think that it had not been an easy matter for any one, in the text here pitched upon by me, to have run out into a long, fulsome allegory, comparing the scribe and the householder together, and now and then to have cast in a rhyme, with a *quid*, a *quo*, and a *quomodo*, and the like? But certainly it would then have been much more difficult for the judicious to hear such things, than for any, if so inclined, to have composed them. The practice, therefore, of such persons is upon no terms to be endured. Nor,

2. Is the contrary of it to be at all more endured in those who cry up their mean, heavy, careless, and insipid way of handling things sacred, as the only spiritual and evangelical way of preaching, while they charge all their crude incoherences, *saucy* familiarities with God, and nauseous tautologies, upon the Spirit

prompting such things to them, and that as the most elevated and seraphic heights of religion. Both these sorts, as I have said, are absolutely to be exploded; and it is hard to judge which of them deserves it most. It is indeed no ways decent for a grave matron to be attired in the gaudy, flaunting dress of youth; but it is not at all uncomely for such a one to be clothed in the richest and most costly silk, if black or grave. For it is not the richness of the piece, but the gaudiness of the colour, which exposes to censure. And therefore, as I showed before that the *θεοί's* and the *δωρί's*, the *Deus dixit* and the *Deus benedixit*, could not be accounted wit; so neither can the whimsical cant of *issues*, *products*, *tendencies*, *breathings*, *indwellings*, *rollings*, *recumbencies*,* and scriptures misapplied, be accounted divinity. In a word, let but these new lights, so apt to teach their betters, instead of all this and the like jargon, bring us, in their discourses, strength of argument, clearness of consequence, exactness of method, and propriety of speech, and then let prejudice and party (whatsoever they may mutter against them) despise and deride them if they can. But persons of light, undistinguishing heads, not able to carry themselves clear between extremes, think that they must either flutter, as it were, in the air by a kind of vain empty lightness, or lie grovelling upon the ground by a dead and contemptible flatness; both the one and the other, no doubt, equally ridiculous. But after all, I cannot but believe, that it is the bewitching easiness of the latter way of the two, which chiefly sanctifies and endears it to the practice of these men; and I hope it will not prove offensive to the auditory, if, to release it (could I be so happy) from suffering by such stuff for the future, I venture upon some short description of it; and it is briefly thus: First of all they seize upon some text, from whence they draw something, which they call a doctrine, and well may it be said to be *drawn* from the words: forasmuch as it seldom naturally flows or results from them. In the next place, being thus provided, they branch it into several heads; perhaps twenty, or thirty, or upwards. Whereupon, for the prosecution of these, they repair to some trusty concordance, which never fails them, and by the help of that, they range six or seven scriptures under each head; which scriptures they prosecute one by one, first amplifying and enlarging upon one, for some considerable time, till they have spoiled it, and then that being done, they pass to another, which in its turn suffers accordingly. And these impertinent and unpremeditated enlargements they look upon as the motions and breathings of the Spirit, and therefore much beyond those carnal ordinances of sense and reason, supported by industry and study; and this they call a *saving way* of preaching, as it must be confessed to be a way to save much labour, and nothing else that I know of.

* Terms often and much used by one J. O., a great leader and oracle in those times.

But how men should thus come to make the salvation of an immortal soul such a slight, extemporary business, I must profess I cannot understand: and would gladly understand upon whose example they ground this way of preaching; not upon that of the apostles, I am sure. For it is said of St. Paul, in his sermon before Felix, that “he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.” The words being in Acts xxiv. 25, διαλεγόμενου δὲ αὐτοῦ, and according to the natural force and import of them, signifying that he discoursed or reasoned dialectically, following one conclusion with another, and with the most close and pressing arguments from the most persuasive topics of reason and divinity. Whereupon we quickly find the prevalence of his preaching in a suitable effect, that “Felix trembled.” Whereas had Paul only cast about his arms, spoken himself hoarse, and cried, “You are damned,” though Felix (as guilty as he was) might have given him the hearing, yet possibly he might also have looked upon him as one whose passion had, at that time, got the start of his judgment, and accordingly have given him the same coarse salute which the same Paul afterwards so undeservedly met with from Festus; but his zeal was too much under the conduct of his reason to fly out at such a rate.

But to pass from these indecencies to others, as little to be allowed in this sort of men; can any tolerable reason be given for those strange new postures used by some in the delivery of the word? Such as shutting the eyes, distorting the face, and speaking through the nose, which I think cannot so properly be called preaching, as toning of a sermon. Nor do I see why the word may not be altogether as effectual for the conversion of souls, delivered by one who has the manners to look his auditory in the face, using his own countenance and his own native voice, without straining it to a lamentable and doleful whine (never serving to any purpose, but where some religious cheat is to be carried on). That ancient, though seemingly odd saying, *Loquere ut te videam*, in my poor judgment, carries in it a very notable instruction, and peculiarly applicable to the persons and matter here pointed at. For, supposing one to be a very able and excellent speaker, yet, under the forementioned circumstances, he must, however, needs be a very ill sight; and the case of his poor suffering hearers very severe upon them, while both the matter uttered by him shall grate hard upon the ear, and the person uttering it at the same time equally offend the eye. It is clear, therefore, that the men of this method have sullied the noble science of divinity, and can never warrant their practice, either from religion or reason, or the rules of decent and good behaviour, nor yet from the example of the apostles, and least of all from that of our Saviour himself. For none surely will imagine, that these men’s “speaking as never man spoke before,” can pass for any imitation of him. And here I humbly conceive

that it may not be amiss to take occasion to utter a great truth, as both worthy to be now considered, and never to be forgot: namely, that if we reflect upon the late times of confusion which passed upon the ministry, we shall find that the grand design of the fanatic crew was to persuade the world that a standing, settled ministry, was wholly useless. This, I say, was the main point which they then drove at. And the great engine to effect this, was by engaging men of several callings (and those the meaner still the better) to hold forth and harangue the multitude, sometimes in streets, sometimes in churches, sometimes in barns, and sometimes from pulpits, and sometimes from tubs: and in a word, wheresoever and howsoever they could clock the senseless and unthinking rabble about them. And with this practice well followed, they (and their friends the Jesuits) concluded, that in some time it would be no hard matter to persuade the people that if men of other professions were able to teach and preach the word, then to what purpose should there be a company of men brought up to it, and maintained in it, at the charge of a public allowance? Especially when at the same time the truly godly so greedily gaped and grasped at it for their self-denying selves. So that preaching, we see, was their prime engine. But now what was it which encouraged these men to set up for a work, which if duly managed was so difficult in itself, and which they were never bred to? Why, no doubt it was that low, cheap, illiterate way, then commonly used, and cried up for the only gospel, soul-searching^a way (as the word then went), and which the craftier sort of them saw well enough, that with a little exercise and much confidence, they might in a short time come to equal, if not exceed; as it cannot be denied, but that some few of them (with the help of a few friends in masquerade) accordingly did. But on the contrary, had preaching been made and reckoned a matter of solid and true learning, of theological knowledge, and long and severe study, as the nature of it required it to be, assuredly, no preaching cobbler amongst them all would ever have ventured so far beyond his last as to undertake it. And consequently this, their most powerful engine for supplying the church and clergy, had never been attempted, nor perhaps so much as thought on: and therefore of most singular benefit, no question, would it be to the public, if those who had authority to second their advice, would counsel the ignorant and the forward, to consider what divinity is, and what they themselves are, and so to put up their preaching tools, their medullas, note-books, their mellificiums, concordances, and all, and betake themselves to some useful trade, which nature had most particularly fitted them for. This is what I thought fit to offer and recommend; and that not out of any humour of opposition to this or that sort of men (for whatsoever they may deserve, I think them below it), but out of a

dutiful zeal for the advancement of what most of us profess, divinity: as likewise for the honour of that place which we belong to, the university; and which of late years I have with no small sorrow heard often reflected upon, for the meanness of many performances in it, noways answerable to the ancient reputation of so noble a seat of knowledge. For let the enemies of that and us say what they will, no man's dulness is or can be his duty, and much less his perfection.

And thus having considered the two different, or rather contrary ways of handling the word, and most justly rejected them both, I shall now briefly give the reasons of our rejection of them; and these shall be two.

1. Because both these ways, to wit, the light and comical, and the dull and heavy, extremely expose and discredit the ordinance of preaching. And,

2. Because they no less disgrace the church itself.

1. And first, we shall find how much both of them expose and discredit the ordinance of preaching; even that ordinance which was originally designed for the two greatest things in the world; the honour of God, and the conversion of souls. For if to convert a soul, even by the word itself, and the strongest arguments which the reason of man can bring (as being no more than instruments, or rather mere conditions in the case), if, I say, this be reckoned a work above nature, as really it is, then surely to convert one by a jest would be a reach beyond a miracle. In short, it is this unhallowed way of preaching which turns the pulpit into a stage, and the most sovereign remedy against sin and preservative of the soul into the sacrifice of fools; making it a matter of sport to the light and vain, of pity to the sober and devout, and of scorn and loathing to all: and I believe never yet drew a tear or a sigh from any judicious and well-disposed auditor, unless perhaps for the sin and vanity of the speaker: so sad a thing it is, when sermons shall be such, that the most serious hearer of them shall not be able to command or keep fixed his attention and his countenance too. For can it be imagined excusable, or indeed tolerable, for one who owns himself for God's ambassador to the people, to speak those things as by his authority, of which it is hard to judge whether they detract from the honour or honesty of an ambassador most? But in a word, when the professed dispensers of the weighty matters of religion shall treat them in a way so utterly unsuitable to the weight and grandeur of them, do they not come too near the infamous example of Eli's two sons, who managed their priestly office (as high and sacred as it was) in so wretched a manner, that it is said in 1 Sam. ii. 17, that "the people abhorred the offering of the Lord;" and if so, we may be sure that they abhorred the offerers much more?

2. As the forementioned ways of handling the word, viz.,

the light and comical, and the heavy and dull, do mightily discredit the great ordinance of preaching, so they equally discredit the church itself. It is the unhappy fate of the clergy, above all men, that their failures and defects never terminate in their own persons, but still rebound upon their function; a manifest injustice certainly; where one is the criminal, and another must be the sufferer: but yet as bad as it is, from the practice of some persons, to take occasion to reproach the church; so, on the other side, to give occasion is undoubtedly much worse. And therefore, whatsoever relation to, or whatsoever interest in, or affection to the church, such may or do pretend to, they are really greater enemies and fouler blots to her excellent constitution, than the most avowed opposers and maligners of it; and consequently would have disoblged her infinitely less, had they fallen in with the schismatics and fanatics in their bitterest invectives against her; and that even to the renouncing her orders (as some of them have done) and an entire quitting of her communion besides; the greatest kindness that such could possibly have done her. For better it is to be hissed at by a snake out of the hedge or the dunghill, than to be hissed at and bitten too by one in one's own bosom. But I trust, that when men shall seriously and impartially consider how and from whence the church's enemies have taken advantage against her, there will be found those whose preaching shall both answer and adorn her constitution, and withal, make her excellent instructions from the pulpit so to suit as well as second her incomparable devotions from the desk, that they shall neither fly out into those levities and indecencies (so justly before condemned) on the one hand; nor yet sink into that sordid, supine dulness on the other, which our men of the Spirit so much affect to distinguish themselves by, and which we by no means desire to vie with them in. In sum, we hope that all our church performances shall be such, that she shall as much outshine all those about her in the soundness and sobriety of her doctrine, as she surpasses them all in the primitive excellency of her discipline.

And thus having finished the first of the two general inferences from the foregoing particulars, which was for the reproof of two contrary sorts of dispensers of the word; and given reasons against them both; I shall now in the

Second place, pass to the other and concluding inference from this whole discourse; and that shall be, to exhort and advise those who have already heard what preparations are required to a gospel scribe "instructed to the kingdom of heaven," and who withal design themselves for the same employment, with the utmost seriousness of thought to consider the high reasonableness, or rather absolute necessity, of their bestowing a competent and sufficient time in the universities for that purpose. And to dissuade such from a sudden and hasty relinquishment of them

(besides arguments, more than enough, drawn from the great inconveniences of so doing, and the implicit prohibition of St. Paul himself, declaring that "he who undertakes a pastoral charge must not be a novice,") there is a still more cogent reason for the same, and that from the very nature of the thing itself: for how, naturally speaking, can there be a fitness for any great thing or work without preparation? And how can there be preparation without due time and opportunity? It is observed of the Levites, though much of their ministry was only shoulder-work, that they had yet a very considerable time for preparation. They were consecrated to it by the imposition of hands at the age of five and twenty; after which they employed five years in learning their office, and then at the thirtieth year of their age, they began their Levitical ministration; at which time also our blessed Saviour began his ministry. But now under the gospel, when our work is ten times greater, as well as twice ten times more spiritual than theirs was, do we think to furnish ourselves in half the space? There was lately a company of men called triers, commissioned by Cromwell, to judge of the abilities of such as were to be admitted by them into the ministry. Who, forsooth, if any of that Levitical age of thirty presented himself to them for their approbation, they commonly rejected him with scorn and disdain; telling him, that if he had not been lukewarm and good for nothing, he would have been disposed of in the ministry long before; and they would tell him also, that he was not only of a legal age, but of a legal spirit too; and as for things legal (by which we poor mortals, and men of the letter, and not of the Spirit, understand things done according to law), this they renounced, and pretended to be many degrees above it; for otherwise we may be sure that their great master of misrule, Oliver, would never have commissioned them to serve him in that post. And now what a kind of ministry, may we imagine, such would have stocked this poor nation with, in the space of ten years more? But the truth is, for those whose divinity was novelty, it ought to be no wonder if their divines were to be novices too; and since they intended to make their preaching and praying an extemporary work, no wonder if they were contented also with an extemporary preparation, and after two or three years spent in the university, ran abroad, under a pretence of "serving God in their generation," a term in mighty request with them; and that for reasons, it is supposed, best known to themselves. But as for such mushroom divines, who start up so of a sudden, we do not usually find their success so good as to recommend their practice. Hasty births are seldom long-lived, but never strong: and therefore I hope, that those who love the church so well as not to be willing that she should suffer by any failure of theirs, will make it their business so to stock themselves here, as to carry from hence both learning and experience to that arduous and great work, which so eminently requires both. And the more inexcusable will an over-hasty leaving this noble place of improvement be, by how much the greater

encouragement we now have to make a longer stay in it than we had some years since: Providence having broken the rod of (I believe) as great spiritual oppression as was ever before exercised upon any company or corporation of men whatsoever. When some spiritual tyrants, then at the top and head of it, not being able to fasten any accusation upon men's lives, mortally maligned by them, would presently arraign and pass sentence upon their hearts; and deny them the proper encouragement and support of scholars, because, forsooth, they were not (in their refined sense) godly and regenerate; nor allowed to be godly, because they would not espouse a faction, by resorting to their congregational, house-warming meetings; where the brotherhood (or *sisterhood* rather) used to be so very kind to 'their friends and brethren in the Lord.' Besides the barbarous, raving insolence, which those spiritual dons from the pulpit were wont to show to all sorts and degrees of men, high and low; representing every casual mishap as a judgment from God upon such and such particular persons; who being implacably hated by the party, could not, it seems, be otherwise by God himself. For "Mark the men," said Holderforth,* as I myself with several others frequently heard him. And then having thus fixed his mark, and taken aim, he would shoot through and through it with a vengeance. But I hope things are already come to that pass, that we should never again hear any, especially of our own body, in the very face of loyalty and learning, dare in this place (so renowned for both) either rail at majesty, or decry a standing ministry, and in a most unnatural and preposterous manner plant their batteries in the pulpit for the beating down of the church.

In fine, therefore, both to relieve your patience and close up this whole discourse, since Providence, by a wonder of mercy, has now opened a way for the return of our laws and our religion, it will concern us all seriously to consider, that as the work before us is the greatest and most important, both with reference to this world and the next, so likewise to remember and lay to heart, that this is the place of preparation, and now the time of it: and consequently, that the more time and care shall be taken by us to go from hence prepared for our great business, the better, no doubt, will be our work, and the larger our reward.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

* Dr. H. W., violently thrust in canon of Christ-church, Oxon, by the parliament visitors, in the year 1647.

SERMON VI.

PROSPERITY EVER DANGEROUS TO VIRTUE.

PROVERBS I. 32.

The prosperity of fools shall destroy them.

It is a thing partly worth our wonder, partly our compassion, that what the greatest part of men are most passionately desirous of, that they are generally most unfit for; for they look upon things absolutely in themselves, without examining the suitability of them to their own conditions; and so, at a distance, court that as an enjoyment, which upon experience they find a plague and a great calamity. And this peculiar ill property has folly, that it widens and enlarges men's desires, while it lessens their capacities. Like a dropsy, which still calls for drink, but not affording strength to digest it, puts an end to the drinker, but not the thirst.

As for the explication of the text, to tell you that in the dialect of the scripture, but especially of this book of the Proverbs, wicked men are called fools, and wickedness folly; as on the contrary, that piety is still graced with the name of wisdom, would be as superfluous as to attempt the proof of a self-evident and first principle, or to light a candle to the sun. By "fools," therefore, are here represented all wicked and vicious persons. Such as turn their backs upon reason and religion, and wholly devoting themselves to sensuality, follow the sway and career of their corrupt affections.

The misery of which persons is from hence most manifest, that when God gives them what they most love, they perish in the embraces of it, are crushed to death under heaps of gold, stifled with an overcoming plenty; like a ship fetching rich commodities from a far country, but sinking by the weight of them in its return. Since, therefore, wicked men are so strangely out in the calculating of their own interest, and account nothing happiness but what brings up death and destruction in the rear of it; and since prosperity is yet, in itself, a real blessing, though to them it becomes a mischief and determines in a curse; it concerns us to look into the reason of this strange event, and examine how it comes to pass, that "the prosperity of fools destroys them."

The reasons of it, I conceive, may be these three:

I. Because every foolish or vicious person is either ignorant or regardless of the proper ends and uses, for which God designs the prosperity of those to whom he sends it.

II. Because prosperity, as the nature of man now stands, has a peculiar force and fitness to abate men's virtues and to heighten their corruptions. And,

III. And lastly, because it directly indisposes them to the proper means of amendment and recovery.

I. And first for the first of these, one reason why vicious persons miscarry by prosperity, is, *because every such person is either ignorant or regardless of the proper ends and uses for which God ordains and designs it.* Which ends are these:—

1. To try and discover what is in a man. All trial is properly inquiry, and inquiry is an endeavour after the knowledge of a thing as yet unknown; and, consequently, in strictness of speech, God, who knows all things, and can be ignorant of nothing, cannot be said to try, any more than he can be said to inquire. But God, while he speaks to men, is often pleased to speak after the manner of men; and the reason of this is not only his condescension to our capacities, but because in many actions God behaves himself with some analogy and proportion to the actings of men. And, therefore, because God sometimes sets those things before men that have in them a fitness to draw forth and discover what is in their heart, as inquisitive persons do who have a mind to pry into the thoughts and actions of their neighbour, he is upon this account said to try or to inquire, though, in truth, by so doing, God's designs not to inform himself, but the person whom he tries, and give both him and the world a view of his temper and disposition.

For the world is ignorant of men, till occasion gives them power to turn their inside outward, and to show themselves. So that what is said of an office may be also said of prosperity, and a fortune, that it does *indicare virum*, discover what the man is, and what metal his heart is made of. We see a slave perhaps cringe and sneak, and humble himself, but do we therefore presently think that we see his nature in his behaviour? No, we may find ourselves much mistaken; for nobody knows, in case Providence should think fit to smile upon such a one, and, as it were, to launch him forth into a deep and wide fortune, how quickly he would be another man, assume another spirit, and grow insolent, imperious, and insufferable.

Nor is this a mystery hid only from the eyes of the world round about a man, but sometimes also even from himself; for he seldom knows his own heart so perfectly, as to be able to give a certain account of the future disposition and inclination of it, when placed under different states and conditions of life. He that has been bred poor, and grown up in a cottage, knows not how his spirits would move, and his blood rise, should he come to handle full bags, to see splendid attendances, and to eat, drink, and sleep in state. Yet no doubt, by such great unlikely changes, as also

by lower degrees of affluence and fruition, Providence designs to sift and search, and give the world some experience of the make and bent of men's minds.

But now the vicious person flies only upon the bulk and matter of the gift, and considers not that the giver has a plot and a design upon him; the consideration of which should naturally make men cautious and circumspect in their behaviour: for surely it is not an ordinary degree of intemperance that would prompt a man to drink intemperately before those who, he knows, gave him his freedom only to try whether he would use it to excess or no. God gave Saul a rich booty upon the conquest of Amalek, to try whether he would prefer real obedience before pretended sacrifice, and the performing of a command before flying upon the spoil: but his ignorance of the use to which God designed that prosperous event, made him let loose the reins of his folly and his covetousness even to the blasting of his crown, and the taking the sceptre from his family, 1 Sam. xv. 23;—"Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord," said Samuel to him, "the Lord hath also rejected thee from being king:" so that this was the effect of his misunderstood success, he conquered Amalek, but destroyed himself.

2. The second end and design of God's giving prosperity, and of which all wicked persons are either ignorant or regardless, is to encourage them in a constant, humble expression of their gratitude to the bounty of their Maker, who deals forth such rich and plentiful provisions to his undeserving creatures. God would have every temporal blessing raise that question in the heart, "Lord, what is man, that thou visitest him? or the son of man, that thou so regardest him?" He never sends the pleasures of the spring, nor the plenties of harvest to surfeit, but to oblige the sons of men; and the very fruits of the earth are intended as arguments to carry their thoughts to heaven.

But the wicked and sensual part of the world are only concerned to find scope and room enough to wallow in; if they can but have it, whence they have it troubles not their thoughts; saying grace is no part of their meal; they feed and grovel like swine under an oak, filling themselves with the mast, but never so much as looking up, either to the boughs that bore, or the hands that shook it down. This is their temper and deportment in the midst of all their enjoyments. But it is far from reaching the purposes of the great governor of the world; who makes it not his care to gratify the brutishness and stupidity of evil persons. He will not be their purveyor only, but their instructor also, and see them taught, as well as fed by their liberality.

3. The third end that God gives men prosperity for, and of which wicked persons take no notice, is to make them helpful to society. No man holds the abundance of wealth, power, and honour, that heaven has blessed him with, as a proprietor, but as

a steward, as the trustee of Providence to use and dispense it for the good of those whom he converses with. For does any one think that the divine providence concerns itself to lift him up to a station of power, only to insult and domineer over those who are round about him; and to show the world how able he is to do a mischief or a shrewd turn? No, God deposits (and he does but deposit) a power in his hand to encourage virtue, and to relieve oppressed innocence; and in a word, to act as his deputy, and as God himself would do, should he be pleased to act immediately in affairs here below.

God bids a great and rich person rise and shine, as he bids the sun; that is, not for himself, but for the necessities of the world. And none is so honourable in his own person, as he who is helpful to others. When God makes a man wealthy and potent, he passes a double obligation upon him; one, that he gives him riches: the other, that he gives him an opportunity of exercising a great virtue; for surely, if God should be pleased to make me his almoner, and the conduit by which his goodness may descend upon my distressed neighbour; though the charity be personally mine, yet both of us have cause to thank God for it—I, that I can be virtuous, and he, that he is relieved.

But the wicked worldly person looks no further than himself; his charity ends at home, where it should only begin. He thinks that Providence fills his purse and his barns only to pamper his own carcass, to invite him to take his ease and his fill, that is, to serve his base appetites with all the occasions of sin. It is not his business to do good, but only to enjoy it, and to enjoy it so, as to lessen it by monopolizing and confining it. Whereupon, being ignorant of the purpose, it is no wonder if he also abuses the bounty of Providence, and so perverts it to his own destruction.

II. The second general reason, why the prosperity of fools proves destructive to them, is, *because prosperity (as the nature of man now stands) has a peculiar force and fitness to abate men's virtues, and to heighten their corruptions.*

1. And first for its abating their virtues. Virtue, of any sort whatsoever, is a plant that grows upon no ground but such a one as is frequently tilled and cultivated with the severest labour. But what a stranger is toil and labour to a great fortune. Persons possessed of this, judge themselves to have actually all that for which labour can be rational. For men usually labour to be rich, great, and eminent: and these are born to all this, as to an inheritance. They are at the top of the hill already; so that while others are climbing and panting to get up, they have nothing else to do, but to lie down and sun themselves, and at their own ease be spectators of other men's labours.

But it is poverty and hardship that has made the most famed commanders, the fittest persons for business, the most expert

statesmen, and the greatest philosophers. For that has first pushed them on upon the account of necessity, which being satisfied, they have aimed a step higher at convenience; and so being at length inured to a course of virtuous and generous sedulity, pleasure has continued that which necessity first began; till their endeavours have been crowned with eminence, mastership, and perfection in the way they have been engaged in.

But would the young effeminate gallant, that never knew what it was to want his will, that every day clothes himself with the riches and swims in the delights of the world; would he, I say, choose to rise out of his soft bed at midnight, to begin a hard and a long march, to engage in a crabbed study, or to follow some tedious perplexed business? No, he will have his servants and the sun itself rise before him; when his breakfast is ready, he will make himself ready too; unless perhaps sometimes his hounds and his huntsmen break his sleep, and so make him early in order to his being idle.

Hence we observe so many great families to decay and moulder away through the debauchery and sottishness of the heir: the reason of which is, that the possession of an estate does not prompt men to those severe and virtuous practices by which it was first acquired. The grandchild perhaps comes and drinks and whores himself out of those fair lands, manors, and mansions, which his glorious ancestors had fought or studied themselves into, which they had got by preserving their country against an invasion, by facing the enemy in the field, hungry and thirsty, early and late, by preferring a brave action before a sound sleep, though nature might never so much require it.

When the success and courage of the Romans had made them masters of the wealth and pleasures of all the conquered nations round about them, we see how quickly the edge of their valour was dulled, and the rigorous honesty of their morals dissolved and melted away with those delights which too, too easily circumvent and overcome the hearts of men. So that instead of the Camilli, the Fabricii, the Scipios, and such like propagators of the growing greatness of the Roman empire, who lived as high things as they performed; as soon as the bulk of it grew vast and unlimited upon the reign of Augustus Cæsar, we find a degenerate race of Caligulas, Neros, and Vitelliuses; and of other inferior sycophants and flatterers, who neither knew nor affected any other way of making themselves considerable, but by a servile adoring of the vices and follies of great ones above them, and a base treacherous informing against virtuous and brave persons about them.

The whole business that was carried on with such noise and eagerness in that great city, then the empress of the western world, was nothing else but to build magnificently, to feed luxuriously, to frequent sports and theatres, to run for the

sportula, and, in a word, to flatter and be flattered; the effects of a too full and unwieldy prosperity. But surely they could not have had leisure to think upon their sumens, their mullets, their Lucrinian oysters, their phenicopters, and the like; they could not have made a rendezvous of all the elements at their table every day, in such a prodigious variety of meats and drinks; they could not, I say, have thus attended these things, had the Gauls been besieging their capitol, or Hannibal at the head of his Carthaginian army rapping at their doors: this would quickly have turned their spits into swords; and whet their teeth too against their enemies. But when peace, ease, and plenty took away these whetstones of courage and emulation, they insensibly slid into the Asiatic softness, and were intent upon nothing but their cooks and their ragouts, their fine attendants and unusual habits; so that the Roman genius was (as the English seems to be now) even lost and stifled, and the conquerors themselves transformed into the guise and garb of the conquered; till by degrees the empire shrivelled and pined away; and from such a surfeit of immoderate prosperity, passed at length into a final consumption.

Nor is this strange, if we consider man's nature, and reflect upon the great impotence and difficulty that it finds in advancing into the ways of virtue merely by itself, without some collateral aids and assistances: and such helps as shall smooth the way before it, by removing all hinderances and impediments. For virtue, as it first lies in the heart of man, is but a little spark; which may indeed be blown into a flame; it has that innate force in it, that being cherished and furthered in its course, the least particle falling from a candle may climb the top of palaces, waste a city, and consume a neighbourhood. But then the suitableness of the fuel, and the wind and the air must conspire with its endeavours: this is the breath that must enliven, and fan, and bear it up, till it becomes mighty and victorious. Otherwise do we think that that little thing that falling upon thatch, or a stack of corn, prevails so marvelously, could exert its strength and its flames, its terror and its rage, falling into the dew or the dust? There it is presently checked, and left to its own little bulk to preserve itself; which meeting with no catching matter, presently expires and dies, and becomes weak and insignificant.

In like manner let us suppose a man, according to his natural frame and temper, addicted to modesty and temperance, to virtuous and sober courses. Here is indeed something improvable into a bright and a noble perfection; nature has kindled the spark, sown the seed, and we see the rude draught and first lineaments of a Joseph, a Cato, or a Fabricius. But now has this little embryo strength enough to thrust itself into the world? To hold up its head, and to maintain its course to a perfect maturity, against all the assaults and batteries of intemperance; all

the snares and trepans that common life lays in its way to extinguish and suppress it? Can it abstain in the midst of all the importunities and opportunities of sensuality without being confirmed and disciplined by long hardships, severe abridgments and the rules of virtue frequently inculcated and carefully pressed? No, we shall quickly find those hopeful beginnings, dashed and swallowed by such ruining delights. Prosperity is but a bad nurse to virtue; a nurse which is like to starve it in its infancy, and to spoil it in its growth.

2. I come now in the next place to show, that, as it has such an aptness to lessen and abate virtue, so it has a peculiar force also to heighten and inflame men's corruptions.

Nothing shall more effectually betray the heart into a love of sin, and a loathing of holiness, than an ill-managed prosperity. It is like some meats, the more luscious, so much the more dangerous. Prosperity and ease upon an unsanctified, impure heart, is like the sunbeams upon a dunghill, it raises many filthy, noisome exhalations. The same soldiers, who in hard service and in the battle are in perfect subjection to their leaders, in peace and luxury are apt to mutiny and rebel. That corrupt affection which has lain, as it were, dead and frozen in the midst of distracting business, or under adversity, when the sun of prosperity has shined upon it, then, like a snake, it presently recovers its former strength and venom. Vice must be caressed and smiled upon, that it may thrive and sting. It is starved by poverty: it droops under the frowns of fortune, and pines away upon bread and water. But when the channels of plenty run high, and every appetite is plied with abundance and variety, so that satisfaction is but a mean word to express its enjoyment; then the inbred corruption of the heart shows itself pampered and insolent, too unruly for discipline, and too big for correction.

Which will appear the better by considering those vices which more particularly receive improvement by prosperity.

(1.) And the first is pride. Who almost is there, whose heart does not swell with his bag? and whose thoughts do not follow the proportions of his condition? What difference has been seen in the same man poor and preferred! His mind, like a mushroom, has shot up in a night. His business is first to forget himself, and then his friends. When the sun shines, then the peacock displays his train.

We know when Hezekiah's treasures were full, his armouries replenished, and the pomp of his court rich and splendid, how his heart was lifted up, and what vaunts he made of all to the Babylonish ambassadors, Isa. xxix. 2, though in the end, as most proud fools do, he smarted for his ostentation. See Nebuchadnezzar also strutting himself upon the survey of that mass of riches and settled grandeur that Providence had blessed his

court with. It swelled his heart, till it broke out at his mouth in that rodomontade, Dan. iv. 30, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the glory of my majesty?" Now, that prosperity, by fomenting a man's pride, lays a certain train for his ruin, will easily be acknowledged by him who either from scripture or experience shall learn what a spite Providence constantly owes the proud person. He is the very eye-sore of heaven: and God even looks upon his own supremacy as concerned to abase him.

(2.) Another sin that is apt to receive increase and growth from prosperity, is luxury and uncleanness. Sodom was a place "watered like the garden of God," Gen. xiii. 10. "There was in it fulness of bread," Ezek. xvi. 49, and a redundant fruition of all things. This was the condition of Sodom, and what the sin of it was, and the dismal consequence of that sin, is too well known. The Israelites committing fornication with the daughters of Moab, which reaped down so many thousands of them at once, was introduced with feasting and dancing, and all the gaieties and festivities of a prosperous, triumphing people. We read of nothing like adultery in a persecuted David in the wilderness; he fled here and there like a chaste roe upon the mountains; but when the delicacies of the court softened and ungirt his spirit, when he drowsed upon his couch, and sunned himself upon the leads of his palace: then it was that this great hero fell by a glance, and buried his glories in his neighbour's bed; gaining to his name a lasting slur, and to his conscience a fearful wound.

As Solomon says of a man surprised with surfeit and intemperance, we may say of every foolish man immersed in prosperity, that "his eyes shall look upon strange women, and his heart shall utter perverse things." It is a tempting thing for the fool to be gadding abroad in a fair day. But Dinah knows not but the snare may be laid for her, and she return with a rape upon her honour, baffled and deflowered, and robbed of the crown of her virginity. Lot's daughters revelled and banqueted their father into incest.

The unclean devil haunts the families of the rich, the gallant, and the high livers; and there is nothing but the wisdom from above which descends upon strict, humble, and praying persons, that can preserve the soul pure and sound in the killing neighbourhood of such a contagion.

(3.) A third sin that prosperity inclines the corrupt heart of man to, is great profaneness, and neglect of God in the duties of religion. Those who lie soft and warm in a rich estate, seldom come to heat themselves at the altar. It is a poor fervour that arises from devotion, in comparison of that which sparkles from the generous draughts and the festival fare which attends the tables of the wealthy and the great. Such men are, as they think, so happy, that they have no leisure to be holy. They look

upon prayer as the work of the poor and the solitary, and such as have nothing to spend but their time and themselves. If Jesurun wax fat, it is ten to one but he will kick against him who made him so.

And now, I suppose, a reflection upon the premises cannot but press every serious person with a consideration of the ticklish estate he stands in, while the favours of Providence are pleased to breathe upon him in these gentle gales. No man is wholly out of the danger which we have been discoursing of; for every man has so much of folly in him, as he has of sin; and therefore he must know, that his foot is not so steady but it may slip and slide in the oily paths of prosperity.

The treachery and weakness of his own heart may betray and insensibly bewitch him into the love and liking of a fawning vice. What the prophet says of wine and music may be also said of prosperity, whose intoxications are not at all less, that it "steals away the heart." The man shall find that his heart is gone, though he perceives not when it goes.

And the reason of all this is, because it is natural for the soul in time of prosperity to be more careless and unbent: and consequently not keeping so narrow a watch over itself, is more exposed to the invasions and arts of its industrious enemy. Upon which account, the wise and the cautious will look upon the most promising season of prosperity with a doubtful and a suspicious eye: as beware, lest while it offers a kiss to the lips, it brings a javelin for the side; many hearts have been thus melted, that could have never been broke. This also may be a full though a sad argument to allay the foolish envy with which some are apt to look upon men of great and flourishing estates at a distance; for how do they know, that what they make the object of their envy is not a fitter object for their pity? and that this glistening person, so much admired by them, is not now a preparing for his ruin and fattening for the slaughters of eternity? that he does not eat his bane, and carouse his poison? The poor man perhaps is cursed into all his greatness and prosperity. Providence has put it as a sword into his hand, for the wounding and destroying of his own soul: for he knows not how to use any of these things; and so has only this advantage, that he is damned in state, and goes to hell with more ease, more flourish and magnificence than other men.

And thus much for the second general reason, why the prosperity of fools proves fatal and destructive to them. I come now to

III. The third and last, which is, because *prosperity directly indisposes men to the proper means of their amendment and recovery.*

1. As first, it renders them utterly averse from receiving counsel and admonition. Jer. xxii. 21, "I spake to thee in thy

prosperity, and thou saidst, I will not hear." The ear is wanton and ungoverned, and the heart insolent and obdurate, till one is pierced, and the other made tender by affliction. Prosperity leaves a kind of dulness and lethargy upon the spirits; so that the still voice of God will not awaken a man, but he must thunder and lighten about his ears, before he will be brought to take notice that God speaks to him. All the divine threatenings and reprehensions beat upon such a one but as stubble upon a brass wall: the man and his vice stand firm, unshaken, and unconcerned; he presumes that the course of his affairs will proceed always as it does, smoothly, and without interruption; that "to-morrow will be as to-day, and much more abundant." It is natural for men in a prosperous condition neither to love nor suspect a change.

But besides, prosperity does not only shut the ear against counsel, by reason of the dulness that it leaves upon the senses; but also upon the account of that arrogance and untutored haughtiness that it brings upon the mind; which of all other qualities chiefly stops the entrance of advice, by making a man look upon himself as too great and too wise to admit of the assistances of another's wisdom. The richest man will still think himself the wisest man. And where there is fortune, there needs no advice.

2. Much prosperity utterly unfits such persons for the sharp trials of adversity; which yet God uses as the most proper and sovereign means to correct and reduce a soul grown vain and extravagant, by a long, uninterrupted felicity. But an unsanctified, unregenerate person, passing into so great an alteration of estate, is like a man in a sweat entering into a river or throwing himself into the snow; he is presently struck to the heart; he languishes, and meets with certain death in the change. His heart is too effeminate and weak to contest with want and hardship, and the killing misery of having been happy heretofore. For in this condition he certainly misbehaves himself one of these two ways.

(1.) He either faints and desponds, and parts with his hope together with his possessions. He has neither confidence in Providence nor substance in himself, to bear him out, and buoy up his sinking spirit, when the storms and showers of an adverse fortune shall descend, and beat upon him, and shake in pieces the pitiful fabric of his earthly comforts. The earth he treads upon is his sole joy and inheritance; and that which supports his feet must support his heart also: otherwise he cannot, like Job, rest upon that Providence that places him upon a dunghill.

(2.) Such a person, if he does not faint and sink in adversity, then on the contrary he will murmur and tumultuate, and blaspheme the God that afflicts him. A bold and a stubborn spirit naturally throws out its malignity this way. It will make a

man die cursing and raving, and even breathe his last in a blasphemy. No man knows how high the corruption of some natures will work and foam, being provoked and exasperated by affliction.

Having thus shown the reason why prosperity becomes destructive to some persons; surely it is now but rational, in some brief directions, to show how it may become otherwise; and that is, in one word, by altering the quality of the subject. Prosperity, I showed, was destructive to fools; and therefore, the only way for a man not to find it destructive, is for him not to be a fool; and this he may avoid by a pious observance of these following rules. As

1. Let him seriously consider upon what weak hinges his prosperity and felicity hangs. Perhaps the cross falling of a little accident, the omission of a ceremony, or the misplacing of a circumstance, may determine all his fortunes for ever. Or perhaps his whole interest, his possessions, and his hopes too, may live by the breath of another, who may breathe his last to-morrow. And shall a man forget God and eternity for that which cannot secure him the reversion of a day's happiness? Can any favourite bear himself high and insolent upon the stock of the largest fortune imaginable, who has read the story of Wolsey or Sejanus? Not only the death, but the humour of his prince or patron may divest him of all his glories, and send him stripped and naked to his long rest. How quickly is the sun overcast, and how often does he set in a cloud, and that cloud break in a storm! He that well considers this, will account it a surer livelihood to depend upon the sweat of his own brow than the favour of another man's. And even while it is his fortune to enjoy it, he will be far from confidence; confidence, which is the downfall of a man's happiness and a traitor to him in all his concerns; for still it is the confident person who is deceived.

2. Let a man consider how little he is bettered by prosperity as to those perfections which are chiefly valuable. All the wealth of both the Indies cannot add one cubit to the stature either of his body or his mind. It can neither better his health, advance his intellectuals, or refine his morals. We see those languish and die, who command the physic and physicians of a whole kingdom. And some are dunces in the midst of libraries, dull and sottish in the very bosom of Athens; and far from wisdom, though they lord it over the wise.

For does he, who was once both poor and ignorant, find his notions or his manners any thing improved, because perhaps his friend or father died, and left him rich? Did his ignorance expire with the other's life? Or does he understand one proposition in philosophy, one mystery in his profession at all the more, for his keeping a bailiff or a steward? As great and as good a landlord as he is, may he not for all this have an empty room, yet

to let? and that such a one is likely to continue empty upon his hands (or rather head) for ever? If so, surely then none has cause to value himself upon that which is equally incident to the worst and weakest of men.

3. And lastly, Let a man correct the gaities and wanderings of his spirit, by the severe duties of mortification. Let him, as David says, "mingle his drink with weeping," and dash his wine with such water. Let him effect that upon himself by fasting and abstinence, which God would bring others to, by penury and want. And by so doing, he shall disenslave and redeem his soul from a captivity to the things he enjoys, and so make himself lord as well as possessor of what he has. For repentance supplies the discipline of adversity; and abstinence makes affliction needless, by really compassing the design of it upon the nobler account of choice; the scarceness of some meals will sanctify the plenty of others. And they are the quadragesimal fasts which fit both body and soul for the festivals of Easter.

The wisest persons in the world have often abridged themselves in the midst of their greatest affluence; and given bounds to their appetites while they felt none in their fortunes. And that prince who wore sackcloth under his purple, wore the livery of virtue, as well as the badge of sovereignty; and was resolved to be good, in spite of all his greatness.

Many other considerations may be added, and these further improved. But to sum up all in short; since "folly is so bound up in the heart of man," and since the fool in his best, that is, in his most prosperous condition, stands tottering upon the very brink of destruction, surely the great use of the whole foregoing discourse should be to remind us, in all our prayers, not so much to solicit God for any temporal enjoyment, as for a heart that may fit us for it; and that God would be the chooser, as well as the giver of our portion in this world; who alone is able to suit and sanctify our condition to us, and us to our condition.

To whom therefore be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON VII.

SHAMELESSNESS IN SIN THE CERTAIN FORERUNNER OF DESTRUCTION.

JEREMIAH VI. 15.

Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall amongst them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the Lord.

HE, who after the commission of great sins, can look God, his conscience, and the world in the face, without blushing, gives a shrewd and sad demonstration that he is too far gone in the ways of sin and death, to be reclaimed to God or recovered to himself without a miracle. For having lost not only the substance of virtue, but the very colour of it too (as the philosopher called blushing), and the principles of morality having upon the same account lost all hold of him: he now seems to claim a place in the highest rank of sinners: and from the condition of the actually disobedient, and as yet impenitent, to have passed into the unspeakably worse estate of the desperate and incurable. For though almighty God is very free and forward in the addresses of his grace to the souls of men, yet still there must be something in them for grace to work upon: to wit, something of natural spiritual sense and tenderness: which if once extinct and gone (as they may be, and God knows too often are), the Spirit of God will find nothing in such a soul to entertain its motions, or receive its impressions; but the man, having sinned himself past all feeling, may, I fear, be but too justly supposed to have sinned himself past grace too.

And such a sort of sinners seems the prophet to encounter all along this chapter. A pack of wretches hardened and confirmed in their sins; daring God, and defying his laws; with one foot, as it were, trampling upon natural conscience, and with the other upon religion: wretches who, by shaking off all shame and modesty, the first and kindest results of common humanity, seem even to have sinned themselves into another kind of species: while the very shamefulness of the sins they committed, utterly took away all shame from the committers of them; and the guilt which should have covered and confounded their faces with blushing, was the very cause that they could not blush.

Which short account and description of the enormous impiety of the persons here pointed at in the text, being thus premised, let

us now proceed to the consideration of the words themselves, wherein we have these four things observable.

First, The guilt of some extraordinary, crying sins, charged upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, in these words: "They have committed abomination." An expression importing some superlative sort of villany acted by them, whatsoever it might be.

Secondly, Their deportment under this guilt: "They were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush."

Thirdly, God's high resentment of the monstrosity of such a shameless carriage, implied in that vehement interrogatory exclamation, "Were they ashamed?"

Fourthly and lastly, The judgment consequent hereupon in the concluding words of the text, "Therefore they shall fall amongst them that fall," &c.

These particulars I shall not prosecute in that order and distinction in which they have been laid down, but shall gather the entire sense and drift of them into this one proposition, which I intend for the subject of the following discourse; namely,

That shamelessness in sin is the certain forerunner of destruction.

The prosecution of which proposition I shall manage under these particular heads.

I. I shall show what shame is, and the influence it has upon the government of men's manners.

II. I shall show by what ways men come to cast off shame, and to grow impudent in sin.

III. I shall show the several degrees of shamelessness in sin.

IV. I shall show the reasons why it so remarkably and effectually brings down judgment and destruction upon the sinner. And

V. And lastly, I shall show what those judgments most commonly are, by which it procures the sinner's ruin and destruction. Of all which in their order. And

I. For the first of them, *what shame is, and what influence it has upon the government of men's manners.* In order to which, if we consider the natural frame of man's mind, and the ways and methods by which the divine wisdom governs the affairs of the world, we shall find none more effectual to this great end than the contrariety of passions and affections planted by God in the heart of man; which though in themselves most eager and impetuous, and such as are wholly unable to prescribe either rule or measure to their own operations, yet in the whole economy of them, are disposed with such admirable equality, that the vehemence of one passion is still matched and balanced with the force of another. It is evident from reason, and too sad an experience, that desire, anger, hatred, and the like passions, are of that fury and transport in their egress to, and acting about their respect-

ive objects, that the greatest disturbances in the world spring from thence, and would, no doubt, from disturbance pass into confusion, were there not such passions as sorrow, fear, and shame, to obviate and control them in their excess: so that these are, as it were, the shores and bounds which Providence has set in the soul of man, to check and to give laws to the overflowings of those contrary affections, which would otherwise bear down all before them, and drive all peace and order out of the world. This I thought fit to remark of the passions in general.

And now for the passion of shame in particular, to show what that is and wherein it does consist. I conceive this may be a full account of the nature of it, viz. That it is a grief of mind springing from the apprehension of some disgrace brought upon a man. And disgrace consists properly in men's knowledge or opinion of some defect natural or moral belonging to them. So that when a man is sensible that any thing defective or amiss, either in his person, manners, or the circumstances of his condition, is known or taken notice of by others; from this sense or apprehension of his, there naturally results upon his mind a certain grief or displeasure; which grief properly constitutes the passion of shame. So that shame presupposes in the mind these two things.

1. A great esteem and value of every thing belonging to the due perfection of a man's being. And

2. An earnest desire of other men's knowledge or opinion of this perfection, as possessed by him.

And consequently, as glory is the joy a man conceives from his own perfections, considered with relation to the opinion of others, as observed and acknowledged by them; so shame is the grief a man conceives from his own imperfections, considered with relation to the opinion of the world taking notice of them; and in one word, may be defined 'grief upon the sense of disesteem.' And there is not in the whole mind of man a passion of a quicker and more tender sense, and which receives a deeper and a keener impression from its object, than this of shame: which in my judgment affords a stronger argument to prove a man a creature naturally designed for society and conversation, than any that are usually produced for that purpose. For were not every man conscious to himself of his desire and need of the benefits of conversation, why should he be so solicitous to approve himself to the good opinion of others; and with so much sorrow and impatience regret other men's knowledge of any imperfection belonging to him? Which yet he himself could quietly enough brook the knowledge of, so long as it lay confined within his own breast, and heartily love himself with all his faults. And as the nature of this passion argues a man disposed to society, so when we consider that amongst the objects of this passion, those imperfections, which relate to a man's actions and manners, hold the

prime place; so that a man is more ashamed to be accounted a dishonest or unjust, than a weak or an unfortunate man: it is evident from hence, that the apprehensions and resentments of the turpitude and dishonesty of our actions, are founded upon something born into the world with us, and spring originally from the first and most native discourses of the soul about its own actions.

Now from this, that shame is grounded upon the dread man naturally has of the ill opinion of others, and that chiefly with reference to the turpitude or immorality of his actions, it is manifest that it is that great and powerful instrument in the soul of man, whereby Providence both preserves society, and supports government; forasmuch as it is the most effectual restraint upon him from the doing of such things as more immediately tend to disturb the one and destroy the other. It is indeed more effectual than bare law, and that upon a double account: 1. Of the nature of the evil threatened by it; and, 2. Of the largeness of its extent.

1. And first for the evil threatened. Whereas the law directly threatens pains of the body, or mutilation of limbs to the delinquent: shame threatens disgrace, which above all other things is properly the torment of the soul, and (considering the innate generosity of man's mind, disposing him to prefer a good name before life itself) is much more grievous and insupportable to him than those other inflictions. So that, in that grand exemplar of suffering, even our Saviour himself, his "enduring the cross" is heightened and set off by his "despising the shame," as that which far surpassed all the cruelties of the rods, the nails, and the spear, and, upon the truest estimate of pain, much the bitterer passion of the two. And from hence also it is, that no penal laws are found so forcible for the control of vice, as those wherein shame makes the chief ingredient of the penalty. Death at the block looks not so grim and dismal as death at the gibbet; for here it meets a man clad with infamy and reproach, which does a more grievous execution upon his mind than the other can upon his body. Nay, wounds and pain, and death itself, from terrible, sometimes become contemptible, where they are looked upon but as a passage to honour; and many are easily brought to write their names with their own blood in the records of fame and immortality. So that the "sting of death" here is shame; and the matter of the sharpest punishment, stripped of all reproach and ignominy, is so far from overwhelming the mind with horror and consternation, that in many circumstances it is capable of being reconciled even to nature itself, and that in such a degree, that instead of being submitted to barely upon the stock of patience, it may be made the object of a rational choice. But,

2. As to the other advantage, which sense of shame has above

the law; to wit, that it extends itself to more objects than the law does, and consequently restrains and prevents more evil than the law can; it is to be observed, that whereas the laws of men, in punishing the transgressors of them, take notice only of such gross enormities as directly tend to make a breach upon government and overthrow society; the sense of shame, on the other side, reaches likewise to all indecencies, and not only to such things as shake the being, but to such also as impair the beauties and ornaments of a society: and by that means guards the behaviour of men, even against the first approach, and, indeed, the very show and semblance of immorality. Such a sovereign influence has this passion upon the regulation of the lives and actions of men; indeed, so sovereign and so great, that a society set up purposely for the reformation of manners (God bless it) can hardly have a greater.

And no wonder, if we consider the unaccountable force of it in those strange effects it has sometimes had upon men. Some have been struck with frenzy and distraction, and some with death itself upon the sudden attack of an intolerable confounding shame: the sense of which had at once bereaved them of all their other senses, and they have given up the ghost and their credit together. Take one of the greatest and most approved courage, who makes nothing to look death and danger in the face, who can laugh at the glittering of swords, the clashing of armour, and the hissing of bullets, with all the other terrors of war: take, I say, such a one in a base and a shameful action; and the eye of the discoverer, like that of the basilisk, shall look him dead. So that in such a surprise, he who is valiant, and “whose heart is as the heart of a lion,” shall utterly sink and melt away. Shame shall fly like a poisoned arrow into his heart, and strike like a dart through a liver. So inexpressibly great sometimes are the killing horrors of this passion.

And as it has sometimes these prodigious effects upon surprise, so is it of a malignity not at all less fatal, when it so fastens upon the soul, as to consume and waste it with the continual gnawings of a lingering and habitual grief. He whom shame has done its worst upon, is, *ipso facto*, stripped of all the common comforts of life. Every eye that sees him wounds him, and he thinks he reads his destiny in the forehead of every one who beholds him. The light is to him the shadow of death; he has no heart nor appetite to business; nay, his very food is nauseous to him, and his daily repast no refreshment. It is his mind only which feeds heartily upon his body, and the vulture within which preys upon his stomach. In which wretched condition, having passed some years, first the vigour of his intellectuals begins to flag and dwindle away, and then his health follows; the hectic of the soul produces one in the body; the man from an inward falls into an outward consumption; and

death at length gives the finishing stroke, and closes all with a sad catastrophe. This is the natural progress of this cruel passion.

And thus much for the first thing proposed; which was to show what shame is, and what influence it has upon the government of men's manners. I proceed now to the

II. Which is to show *by what ways men come to cast off shame, and grow impudent in sin.* Concerning which we must first of all observe that the principles of shame and modesty are too deeply rooted in man's nature to be easily plucked out; which makes the loss of them, wheresoever they come to be lost, so extremely sinful: shamelessness in sin being a thing perfectly unnatural, and (if a man could lose his nature as well as his virtue) a deviation even from humanity itself. Nevertheless the frailty and mutability of nature is such, that it is capable of being debauched even in its first and best notions, and of growing into such a change of inclination, as to become quite another thing from what God at first made it. But how and by what means this comes to be effected, is the subject of our present inquiry; and to give some general account of this, we must know, that by whatsoever ways or courses men are brought to cast off that natural tenderness and sensibility of mind, which renders them apprehensive of any thing done unsuitably to their nature, by those properly in this passion of shame first lessened, and at length totally extinguished. Now that may be done several ways.

1. By the commission of great sins. For these waste the conscience, and destroy at once. They are, as it were, a course of wickedness abridged into one act; and a custom of sinning by equivalence. Lesser sins indeed do by degrees sully and change the habit of the soul; but these transform it in a minute; as in the complexion of a man's face, he grows tanned and swarthy by little and little; but if a blast comes, that gives him another face and hue in the twinkling of an eye. Sins of daily incursion insensibly wear away the innate tenderness of the conscience; but whoredoms, murders, and perjuries (though never so much sanctified), and the like, tear and break it off presently. Nor does this contradict the assertion just now premised by us, concerning the difficult removal of shame and modesty. For when a thing falls by a very great blow, though it fall quickly, it cannot be said to fall easily. Besides that nature can hardly pass from its first innocence and modesty to the commission of a great crime, but by many intermediate preparatives of sin; unless it should chance to be strangely seized, and, as it were, ravished by some fierce and horrid temptation. But this very rarely happens; and therefore, though great sins do usually expel shame at once, yet people seldom rush into great sins at first. All that we insist upon in the present case is, that upon what account soever such sins come actually to be committed, they make a mighty

breach and invasion upon the soul, and shame seldom long survives the commission of them. They steel the forehead, and harden the heart, and break those bars asunder, which modesty had originally fenced and enclosed it with. In Jer. iii. 3, "Thou hast a whore's forehead," said the prophet to Jerusalem, "and refusest to be ashamed." A whore's life naturally produces a whore's forehead. Scandalous and flagitious actions superinduce new hardnesses and confidences, which nature of itself would never have reached to. For upon every great sin, the Spirit of God proportionably withdraws his presence from the soul, and, together with it, that influence, by which alone the principles of modesty, and the awe of virtue and goodness, are kept alive and fresh upon the mind. And when the soul is once rifled of these, and has lost the honour of its virgin purity by a foul action, it is left naked and unguarded, and open to all the assaults of its grand enemy; who, if he can go on in his attempts with any tolerable success, will be sure never to give over, till having quite razed all sense of shame and remorse out of the sinner's heart, he at length confirms and seals him up in a state of sin and death. And this he knows is both effectually and compendiously done by sins of a peculiar and more than ordinary guilt, which no sooner enter into the soul, but he also enters with them, and so driving out all shame before him, takes full livery and seisin of it, and keeps firm and quiet possession of the man to his dying day.

2. Custom in sinning never fails in the issue to take away the sense and shame of sin, were a person never so virtuous before. For albeit the object of shame still carries with it something strange, new, and unusual, yet the strangeness of any thing wears off with the frequency of its practice. This makes it familiar to the mind, and being so, the mind is never startled or moved at it. By great sins, as we have shown, the soul casts off shame all on a sudden; but by customary sinning it lays it down leisurely and by degrees. And no man, proceeding in such a course or method, arrives presently at the top of any vice; but holding on a continual, steady progress in the paths of sin, passes at length into a forlorn, shameless condition by such steps as these. First, he begins to shake off the natural horror and dread which he had of breaking any of God's commands, and so not to fear sin: in the next place, finding his sinful appetites gratified by such breaches of the divine law, he comes thereupon to like his sin, and to be pleased with what he has done; and then, from ordinary complacencies, heightened and improved by custom, he comes passionately to delight in such ways. And thus, being captivated with delight, he resolves to continue and persist in them; which since he can hardly do without incurring the censure and ill opinion of the world, he frames himself to a resolute contempt of whatsoever is either thought or said of him;

and so having hereby done violence to those apprehensions of modesty, which nature had placed as guardians and overseers to his virtue, he flings off all shame, wears his sin upon his forehead, looks boldly with it, and so at length commences a fixed, thorough-paced, and complete sinner.

3. The examples of great persons take away the shame of any thing which they are observed to practise, though never so foul and shameful in itself. Every such person stamps a kind of authority upon what he does; and the examples of superiors, and much more of sovereigns, are both a rule and an encouragement to their inferiors. The action is seldom abhorred, where the agent is admired; and the filth of one is hardly taken notice of, where the lustre of the other dazzles the beholder. Nothing is or can be more contagious, than an ill action set off with a great example: for it is natural for men to imitate those above them, and to endeavour to resemble, at least, that which they cannot be. And therefore, whatsoever they see such grandees do, quickly becomes current and creditable, it passes *cum privilegio*: and no man blushes at the imitation of a scarlet or a purple sinner, though the sin be so too.

It is, in good earnest, a sad consideration to reflect upon that intolerable weight of guilt which attends the vices of great and eminent offenders. Every one, God knows, has guilt enough, from his own personal sins, to consign him over to eternal misery; but when God shall charge the death of so many souls upon one man's account, and tell him at the great day, this man had his drunkenness from thee, that man owes his uncleanness to thy example; another was at first modest, bashful, and tender, till thy practice, enforced by the greatness of thy place and person, conquered all those reluctancies, and brought him in the end to be shameless and insensible, of a prostitute conscience and a reprobate mind. When God, I say, shall reckon all this to the score of a great, illustrious, and exemplary sinner, over and above his own personal guilt, how unspeakably greater a doom must needs pass upon him for other men's sins, than could have done only for his own! The sins of all about him are really his sins, as being committed in the strength of that which they had seen him do. Wherein, though his action was personal and particular, yet his influence was universal.

4. The observation of the general and common practice of any thing takes away the shame of that practice. Better be out of the world, than not be like the world, is the language of most hearts. The commonness of a practice turns it into a fashion, and few, we know, are ashamed to follow that. A vice *alamode* will look virtue itself out of countenance, and it is well if it does not look it out of heart too. Men love not to be found singular, especially where the singularity lies in the rugged and severe paths of virtue. Company causes confidence, and multitude

gives both credit and defence, credit to the crime, and defence to the criminal. The fearfullest and the basest creatures, got into herds and flocks, become bold and daring: and the modestest natures, hardened by the fellowship and concurrence of others in the same vicious course, grow into another frame of spirit; and in a short time lose all apprehension of the indecency and foulness of that which they have so familiarly and so long conversed with. Impudence fights with and by number, and by multitude becomes victorious. For no man is ashamed to look his fellow thief or drunkard in the face, or to own a rebellious design in the head of a rebel army.

And we see every day what a degree of shamelessness the common practice of some sins amongst us has brought the generality of the nation to: so that persons of that sex, whose proper ornament should be bashfulness and modesty, are grown bold and forward, offer themselves into company, and even invite those addresses which the severity of former times would have scorned to admit. From the retirements of the closet, they are come to brave it in theatres and taverns; where virtue and modesty are drunk down, and honour left behind to pay the reckoning. And now ask such persons with what face they can assume such unbecoming liberties; and they shall answer you, that it is the mode, the gallantry, and the genteel freedom of the present age, which has redeemed itself from the pitiful pedantry and absurd scrupulosity of former times, in which those bugbears of credit and conscience spoiled all the pleasure, the air, and fineness of conversation. This is all the account you shall have from them; and thus when common practice has vouchèd for an ill thing, and called it by a plausible name, the credit of the world shall take away the shame of the thing: vice grows triumphant; and knowing itself to be in its full glory, scorns to fly to corners or concealments, but loves to be seen and gazed upon, and has thrown off the mask or vizard as a useless, unfashionable thing. This, I say, is the guise of our age, our free thinking and freer practising age, in which people generally are ashamed of nothing but to be virtuous and to be thought old.

5. And lastly, I shall mention one thing more, which renders men shameless; and that is, to have been once greatly and irrecoverably ashamed. For shame is never of any force, but where there is some stock of credit to be preserved. But when a man finds that to be lost, and the recovery of it desperate and impossible; he lets loose his appetites to their full swing, and no longer fears that which he reckons has done its worst upon him already. He is like an undone gamester, who plays on safely, knowing that he can lose no more.

And for this cause, many wise governors having had the utmost advantage against some delinquents upon this account,

yet if they were such as were capable of being either useful or dangerous to the public, have thought it unsafe to disgrace them totally. For in this case government can have no hold of them, by one of the strongest ties in nature, viz. a regard of their credit and reputation. Set a man once in the pillory, and see whether ever after his credit can keep him from playing the knave, if his interest prompts him to it: the man has now looked shame in the face, and looked it out of countenance too; he has swallowed down scorn, and digested it. His reputation is forlorn and gone; and he knows that a good name once dead has no resurrection.

And thus I have done with the second thing proposed, which was to show, by what ways men come to cast off shame, and to grow impudent in sin. I proceed now to the

III. Which is to show *the several degrees of shamelessness in sin*. I shall not pretend to recount them all, but only mention three of the most notorious: as

1. A showing of the greatest respect and making the most obsequious applications and addresses to lewd and infamous persons: and that without any pretence of duty requiring it, which yet alone can justify and excuse men in it. For it is confessed, that no vice can warrant the least failure of respect to our parents or governors, be they never so bad; since, in truth, all respect shown to these does not so much fall upon the persons to whom it is directed, as redound upon the divine law, by which it is commanded. But when people voluntarily make their visits to persons living in open and avowed wickedness, affect to be of their retinue, and their acquaintance, and dependence, treat them, and speak honourably and affectionately of them, this is really and properly to vouch for and to abet their crime; which, duly considered, ought to make their persons as contemptible in the eyes of men, as it certainly renders them vile in the sight of God. Heretofore, persons of honour and genteel quality thought they could not give a deeper wound to their own honour, than by being so much as seen in the company of such as had lost theirs: and suitable to this was the practice of the primitive church. In 1 Cor. v. 11, "I have written to you," says St. Paul, "not to keep company, if any man who is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one, no not to eat." And in 2 Thess. iii. 14, "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." Were this well practised, many would need neither parlours nor ante-chambers to receive visitants in. But now all possible courtship and attendance is thought too little to be used towards persons infamous and odious, and fit to be visited by none but by God himself, who visits after a very different man-

ner from the courtiers of the world. And what is the ground of all this? What the great inducement both to men and women thus to address to such scandalous livers? Why, the very bottom and ground of all is, that by this means they may give credit and countenance to the vice; that so, as occasion serves, they may, without disrepute, practise it themselves.

2. The second degree of shamelessness in sin is, to defend it. In Luke xvi. 15, "Ye are they who justify yourselves," says our Saviour to the Pharisees; they were not only egregious hypocrites, and gross violators of the law, but they also faced down the world, that they did well and meritoriously in those very things, in which their hypocrisy and violation of the law did consist. Now even to extenuate or excuse a sin is bad enough; but to defend it is intolerable. For he who excuses a sin, still supposes it to be a sin, and only endeavours to cover it, or at least to take off some degree of its guilt. But he who defends it, utterly denies its guilt, and, as I may so speak, absolutely unsins it. For he puts it into another rank and order of actions, asserts its legality, and so confounds the essential differences of men's manners; which is directly "to call evil good;" the thing which God declares himself so peculiarly to abominate. Such are properly the devil's advocates. For he who does the part of an advocate, pleads not for mercy upon breach of law confessed; for this were properly to beg, and not to plead; but he alleges that the law is not broken; and that therefore upon terms of justice his cause is good, and consequently needs no pardon, but pleads right on his side. In like manner, whosoever manages the devil's cause, by defending an ill action, in pleading for that, he does by consequence implead the law; to which he endeavours to reconcile it. For if that be not against the law, neither can the law be against that: so that by this means the divine precept becomes a party in the crime, and the rule itself a transgressor. To defend sin is to justify it; and to justify it is to pronounce for it according to sentence of law; and that surely is to condemn the law: a higher affront than which cannot be passed upon the great author and giver of it. Yet such wretches both have been and still are found in the world. Some of which have dared to argue for their debauchery from principles (some call them oracles) of reason; and some again have been so unsufferably profane, as to throw scripture itself in the face of God, by pleading it in behalf of their lewdness. I shall not allege instances, and am sorry that I can: but God knows what pitiful reasoners, what forlorn disputants such show themselves, while they plead reason for that which contradicts reason, and allege scripture in opposition to religion. Nothing I am sure can be pleaded for them; nor perhaps do such persons think that their actions need either plea or pardon. For that which may be defended, certainly needs not to be pardoned; and therefore, if

they will venture things upon this issue, and cast all upon the merits of the cause, they must thank themselves, if at the last and great judgment, God sends them away with no other sentence but this: that as they have defended their sins, so let them now see whether their sins can defend them.

3. The third and last degree of shamelessness in sin is, to glory in it. And higher than this the corruption of man's nature, as corrupt as it is, cannot possibly go; though, the truth is, this may seem to proceed, not so much from a corruption of it, as from something that is a direct contradiction to it. For can any thing, in nature incline a man to glory in his imperfections? to pride and plume himself in his deformities? Was ever any one yet seen to boast of a blear eye or a crooked back? And are not the defects of the soul by so much the more ugly, by how much the soul is naturally more noble than the body, and the faculties of one more excellent than the shape and lineaments of the other?

Yet some there are who have shaken off reason and humanity so far, as to proclaim and trumpet out those villanies upon the house-tops, which such as sin but at an ordinary rate of wickedness commit only in the corners of them: "they declare their sin as Sodom, and hide it not," as the prophet says in Isa. iii. 9; and as the apostle expresses it to the height, Phil. iii. 19, "They glory in their shame." A thing as much against nature, as it can be against religion; and full as contrary to the course and dictates of the one, as to the most confessed rules of the other. Nevertheless, such monsters there are. For may we not hear some vaunting what quantities of drink they can pour down? and how many weak brethren they have in such heroic pot-combats laid under the table? And do not others report with pleasure and ostentation, how dexterously they have overreached their well-meaning neighbour? how neatly they have gulled him of his estate, or abused him in his bed? And lastly, have not some arrived to that frontless and horrid impudence, as to say openly, that they hoped to live to see the day in which an honest woman or a virtuous man should be ashamed to show their head in company? How long such persons may live I know not; how long they deserve to live it is easy to tell. And I dare confidently affirm, that it is as much the concern of government, and the peace of a nation, that the utterers of such things should be laid hold on by the hand of public justice, as it can be to put to death a thief or a highwayman, or any such common malefactor. For this is publicly to set up a standard in the behalf of vice, to wear its colours, and avowedly to assert and espouse the cause of it, in defiance of all that is sacred or civil, moral or religious. I must confess, I am ashamed thus to lay open men's want of shame. But whosoever they are, who are come to this height, let them know that they are consummate in vice, and upon all accounts so

unspeakably bad, that the devil himself can neither make nor wish them worse. And thus much for the third thing proposed, which was to show the several degrees of shamelessness in sin. Pass we now to the

IV. Which is to show *the reasons why it brings down judgment and destruction upon the sinner*. I shall assign two.

1. Because shamelessness in sin always presupposes those actions and courses which God rarely suffers to go unpunished. It presupposes them, I say, as the proper causes from which this shamelessness does proceed. For I have shown that great and heinous crimes, custom in sinning, the criminal examples of great ones, together with a general and received practice of vice, are the ways and means by which the heart of man comes to be hardened against all sense of and shame for sin. But now every one of these does most particularly solicit and call upon God for justice, and put the weapons of vengeance into his hands; so that shamelessness in sin provokes and draws down wrath in the strength and stock of that guilt, which a man always contracts before he can come to be shameless.

2. The other reason why shamelessness in sin brings down the divine judgments upon men, is from the destructive influence which it has upon the government of the world. For the better understanding of which, we must observe, that God, the wise and righteous governor of the universe, finds it necessary in the course of his providence to punish some sins, even in this life. Such as are murders, perjuries, adulteries, gross falsehoods, and the like; and generally all such crimes as have in them a peculiar tendency to overthrow government and common society amongst men. In the number of which (if we may call it one kind of sin, and not rather a general preparative to all sin) we may reckon this shamelessness in sinning. It is an observation frequent in Machiavel, that "when there is a general depravation and corruption of the manners of any people, that government cannot stand." And it is manifest, that the integrity of men's manners cannot be secured, where there is not preserved upon men's minds a true estimate of vice and virtue; that is, where vice is not looked upon as shameful and opprobrious, and virtue valued as worthy and honourable. But now, where vice walks with a daring front, and no shame attends the practice or the practisers of it, there is an utter confusion of the first dividing and distinguishing properties of men's actions; morality falls to the ground, and government must quickly follow. For if virtue comes once to be hissed and exploded, and forced to hide its head, what can recommend it, with all its rigours, to the choice and practice of mankind? since it is not imaginable, that men will take pains to abridge and restrain the unruly appetites of their nature, when no other reward shall follow all these severities,

but scorn and reproach. And if, on the other side, all these appetites should be left fully at liberty to take their own exorbitant satisfaction, how shall government support itself? And how shall laws be able to subsist, where the violation of them is become creditable, and brings an esteem to the violators? This is most certain, that there can be no fence against vice got into reputation; especially when the vice acts also in the strength of a mighty natural propensity to it. For, in this case, it rushes in upon society like a torrent or inundation, with a furious storm driving it on; and virtue must either swim against wind and tide too, that is, both against the struggles of appetite, and the discountenance of the world besides; or it must sink and be swallowed up in the prevailing stream of a contrary practice. Honour is the birthright of virtue, and shame of vice. But if these come to be shifted and transplaced, so that honour still waits on vice, and shame on virtue, government becomes presently like a curious engine, torn in pieces by the violent motion of its own springs and wheels disordered or misplaced.

And whenever it comes to fare thus with any civil state, virtue and common honesty seem to make their appeal to the supreme Governor of all things, to take the matter into his own hands, and to correct those clamorous enormities which are grown too big and strong for law or shame, or any human coercion. And accordingly God often finds himself engaged by some notable judgment to assert and declare his sovereignty, and to convince insolent and audacious sinners, that where shame ends, vengeance must begin, or the government of the world cease; and that if men will not see, they must be made to feel the difference between vice and virtue. For where nature and religion find themselves too weak to redress the extravagance of men's manners, a blow from heaven must do the business, or the societies of the world must fall into confusion and dissolution. But the great judge and ruler of all things, who even for his own honour has undertaken the protection of law, order, and justice here below, so long as he suffers the world to stand, will not suffer these to fall. And therefore, when vice is got above all cure, and scorns all the corrections which fear and shame can apply, God lays hold on judgment, makes bare his arm, and by doing justice upon daring sinners, does then most eminently do justice to his own providence too. And thus much for the fourth thing proposed; which was to show the reasons why shamelessness in sin brings down judgment and destruction upon the sinner. I descend now to the

V. And last, which is to show *what those judgments are by which it procures the sinner's ruin and destruction*. And for this, it must be confessed that they neither are nor can be particularly known to any, but to him who alone knows the wise and deep

counsels of his own will, the great rule and compass which his providence steers by. Nevertheless, so far as his word dictates, we may safely pronounce; and what we find recorded in that, to have been done by God upon such kind of sinners formerly, we may warrantably infer is the most likely to be done by him again.

Now I shall instance in three several sorts of judgments, which we read in scripture to have been inflicted upon shameless sinners: as,

1. A sudden and disastrous death; and indeed suddenness in this can hardly be without disaster. When the Israelites made that wicked combination with the Moabites, we find Zimri, one of the princes of the people, leading Cozbi, an infamous strumpet, into his tent before Moses, and all the congregation looking on with weeping eyes and bleeding hearts. This surely was impudence in the height; impudence, as it were, working up to a full crisis. And we know how quickly the divine justice revenged it upon them by the sword of Phinehas, and such a sudden unlooked-for execution as despatched them both into another world without either space or power of repenting for what they had done in this.

2. Another sort of judgment is war and desolation. In the 19th and 20th chapters of the book of Judges, we read what a detestable piece of villany was acted by some of the Benjamites. And when satisfaction was demanded of them, the whole tribe abets the villany and the villains too; they own the defence of both with sword in hand; they fight for an action not fit to be named, and plead the cause of their lewdness both with their guilt and their blood too about their ears. And was not this to be proof against all shame? For could there be a more absolute and professed homage paid to vice, than thus to march under its banner and to fight its battles? But what is the consequence of all this? Why a whole tribe is almost cut off and destroyed by a fatal civil war; and such a sweeping overthrow and slaughter of that infamous army, as may for ever be a convincing lesson to such shameless wretches, how ill they consult for themselves, who shed that blood which should blush for sin, in the foul and odious defence of it.

3. A third sort of judgment is captivity: which was that here denounced by the prophet in the text against the men of Israel, now grown past shame. And a severe one it was certainly; when the proud and fierce armies of the Assyrians came up against Jerusalem, sacked the city, and laid the temple even with the ground; and upon an absolute and entire conquest, carried away the inhabitants captive into Babylon. Shameless, it seems, they had been in their sin, and therefore God would make them taste what shame was in their punishment; in those bitter taunts and contumelies which always pass upon the conquered from an

insolent and victorious enemy. Conquest and captivity are perhaps the bitterest cup that vengeance can put into the hands of a sinful people. David chose the plague and pestilence before it, as the lesser evil, and the gentler infliction of the two. And he who shall consider the rage and lawless fury of a conquering invading army, needs no other account of the calamities of the vanquished: no respect to the aged, no compassion to the infant: in a word, the Assyrians were as shameless in their cruelties, as the Jews had been in their sins; which made the whole visitation not only a just, but also a suitable revenge.

And thus we have seen what those judgments are, which God from time to time has inflicted upon bold and profligate offenders: and are we now sure that none of all these are kept in reserve for us? The text begins with the charge of shamelessness, and ends with the denunciation of judgment; and shall we be able, think we, to divide and separate the latter part of it from the former, the effect from the cause; and while we bring ourselves under one, wholly to escape the other? How home the charge reaches us, has been made out by showing with what high impudence some amongst us defend sin, and with what undaunted confidence others live in it; and lastly, with what patronage others countenance it. So that vice has clearly got the victory, and carried it against all opposition. It rides on successfully and gloriously, lives magnificently, and fares deliciously every day: and all this in the face of God and man, without either fear of one or shame of the other. Nay, so far are our modern sinners from sneaking under their guilt, that they scorn to hide, or so much as hold down their head for less crimes than many others have lost theirs. Such a rampancy of vice has this age of abused mercies, or rather miracles, brought England to. While, on the other hand, the widows and orphans of many brave and worthy persons, who had both done and suffered honourably for their prince, their church, and their country, as a reward for all this, live in want and misery, and a dismal lack of all things, because they had rather work or beg, do or suffer any thing, than sin for their bread. This is our present case; and being so, do those thriving wretches know that this their prosperous and therefore contagious lewdness may not be preparing for us the fire and fagot, or provoking God to pour in a foreign domineering enemy upon us, an enemy whom we have been always so sottishly fond of; for hardly any other judgment remains yet untried upon the nation? This surely it is natural and reasonable enough to imagine, that such as thus "glory in their shame," be they never so high and great, should have shame and confusion cast upon their glory. My business, I confess, has hitherto been to discourse upon the prophet's words; and I heartily wish that in so doing I may not prove too much a prophet myself.

But whether things may so happen to us or no, and that this

notorious and almost national impudence in sin should ever bring down any of the forementioned judgments upon us (which God in mercy avert), one judgment I am sure, it will infallibly bring along with it, and that is itself. And can there be a dreadfuller judgment than that which gives a man a universal disposition to all sin? which offers up his soul, as it were, a blank to the devil, to write what he will upon it? Of all the curses which can possibly befall a sinner, there is none comparable to this, that he should add iniquity to iniquity, and fall from sin to sin; which the shameless person cannot but do, till he falls by it too: his recovery, while under that character, being utterly impossible. For where there is no place for shame, there can be none for repentance. Shamelessness naturally and necessarily seals a man up under impenitence, and impenitence seals him up to destruction. God of his infinite goodness work better minds in us, which he must and will do, if he intends better things for us.

To whom be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON VIII.

CONCEALMENT OF SIN NO SECURITY TO THE SINNER.

NUMBERS XXXII. 23, latter part.

Be sure your sin will find you out.

OF all the ways to be taken for the prevention of that great plague of mankind, sin, there is none so rational and efficacious, as to confute and baffle those motives by which men are induced to venture upon it; and amongst all such motives, the heart of man seems chiefly to be overpowered and prevailed upon by two; to wit, secrecy in committing sin, and impunity consequent upon it.

Accordingly, Moses, in this chapter, having to deal with a company of men suspected guilty of a base and fraudulent design, though couched under a very fair pretence (as most such designs use to be), he endeavours to dash it in its very conception, by particularly applying himself to encounter those secret ratiocinations and arguments which he knew were the most likely to encourage them in it; and this he does very briefly, but effectually, by assuring them, that how covertly and artificially soever they might carry on their dark project, yet their sin should infallibly find them out.

The subject and occasion of the words is indeed particular, but the design of them is manifestly of a universal import; as reaching the case of all sinners in the world, in their first entrance upon any sinful act or course. And therefore I shall consider them according to this latter and more enlarged sense; casting the prosecution of them under these three following heads: as,

I. I shall show that men generally, if not always, proceed to the commission of sin upon a secret confidence of concealment or impunity.

II. I shall show the grounds and reasons upon which men take up such a confidence. And

III. And lastly, I shall show the vanity of this confidence, by declaring those several ways by which, in the issue, it comes certainly to be defeated.

Of each of which in their order.

I. And for the first of them; to wit, *that men generally, if not always, proceed to the commission of sin, upon a secret confidence of concealment or impunity.* For the better handling of which proposition, I shall lay down these two assertions.

1. That no man is induced to sin, considered in itself, as a thing absolutely or merely evil, but as it bears some resemblance or appearance of good, in the apprehensions of him who commits it. Certain it is that there can be no real good in sin; but if it had no shadow, no show of good, it could not possibly be made the object of a human choice; the will of man never choosing or embracing any thing under the proper notion of evil. But then, as to the kind of this good; if we would know what that is, it is also as certain, that no man can be so far deluded, or rather besotted in his judgment, as to imagine that sin can have any thing of moral good in it; forasmuch as that imports a direct contradiction to the very nature, notion, and definition of sin; and therefore besides that, philosophy, we know, owns and asserts two other sorts of good, to wit, pleasing and profitable; *good* being properly the denomination of a thing, as it suits with our desires or inclinations. According to which acception of the word, whatever pleases or profits us, may, upon that general account, be called good; though otherwise it swerves from the stated rules and laws of honesty and morality. And upon the same ground, sin itself, so far as it carries either pleasure or profit with it, is capable of being apprehended by the mind of man as good; and consequently of being chosen or embraced by the will as such.

2. The other assertion to be laid down is, that God has annexed two great evils to every sin, in opposition to the pleasure and profit of it; to wit, shame and pain. He has, by an eternal and most righteous decree, made these two the inseparable effects and consequents of sin. They are the wages assigned it by the laws of Heaven; so that whosoever commits it, ought to account shame and punishment to belong to him as his rightful inheritance. For it is God who has joined them together by an irreversible sentence; and it is not in the power or art of man to put them asunder. And now, as God has made these two evils the sure consequents of sin, so there is nothing which the nature of man does so peculiarly dread and abhor as these; they being indeed the most directly and absolutely destructive of all its enjoyments; forasmuch as they reach and confound it in the adequate subject of enjoyment, the soul and body; shame being properly the torment of the one, and pain of the other. For the mind of man can have no taste or relish of any pleasure in the world, while it is actually oppressed and overwhelmed with shame; nothing does so keenly and intolerably affect the soul as infamy; it drinks up and consumes the quickness, the gaiety, and activity of the spirits: it dejects the countenance, made by God himself to look upwards; so that this noble creature, the masterpiece of the creation, dares not so much as lift up either his head or his thoughts, but it is a vexation to him even to look upon others, and yet a greater to be looked upon by them. And as shame thus mortifies the

soul, so pain or punishment (the other twin effect of sin) equally harasses the body. We know how much misery pain is able to bring upon the body in this life (in which our pains and pleasures, as well as other things, are but imperfect); there being never a limb or part, never a vein or artery of the body, but it is the scene and receptacle of pain, whensoever it shall please God to unfence it, and let in some sharp disease or distemper upon it. And so exceedingly afflictive are these bodily griefs, that there is nothing which affects the body in the way of pleasure, in any degree comparable to that which affects it in the way of pain. For is there any pleasure in nature, which equals the impressions of the gout, the stone, or even of the toothache itself? But then further, when we shall consider that the pains which we have here mentioned, and a great many more, are but the preludiums, the first-fruits, and beginnings of that pain which shall be infinitely advanced, and finally completed in the torments of another world; when the body shall descend into a bed of fire and brimstone, and be lodged for ever in the burning furnace of an almighty wrath; this consideration surely will or ought to satisfy us, that God will not be behind-hand with the sinner in point of punishment, whatsoever promises his sin may have made him in point of pleasure.

And now if we put these two assertions, laid down by us, together: as first, That no man ever engages in sin, but as he apprehends in it something of pleasure or advantage; and secondly, That shame and pain are by God himself made the assured consequents of sin; which are utterly inconsistent with, and destructive of all such pleasure or advantage: it must needs follow from hence, that the will cannot possibly choose sin, so long as the understanding is under a full conviction or persuasion, that shame and punishment shall certainly follow the commission of it. For no man, doubtless, is so furiously bent upon his lust, or any other infamous passion, as to attempt the satisfaction of it in the marketplace, or in the face of the sun and of the world, or with the sword of the avenger applied to his heart.

Covetousness, we all know, is a blinding, as well as a pressing and a bold vice; yet certainly it could never blind nor infatuate any one to that degree, as to make a judge take a bribe upon the bench, or in the open sight of the court. No; no man is so far able to conquer and cast off those innate fears, which nature has thought fit to bridle and govern the fury of his affections by, as to bid defiance to an evil which his best and strongest reasonings assure him to be unsupportable; and therefore his apprehensions must be, some way or other, first unshackled from a belief of these evils, before his will and his choice can be let loose to the practice of sin. And does not this give us a most philosophical, as well as true account of the infinite reasonableness of the scripture's charging all sin upon unbelief, as the first root and

source of men's apostasy from God? For let men think and say what they will, yet when they venture upon sin, they do not really believe that God will ever revenge it upon them; they may indeed have some general, faint, speculative belief of hell and damnation; but such a belief as is particular and practical, and personally applies and brings it home to their own condition, this they are void of; and it is against the methods of reason and nature, for any man to commit sin with such a belief full and fresh upon his spirit: and consequently, the heart must prevaricate and shift off these persuasions the best it can, in order to its free passage to sin; and this can by no other means be so effectually done, as by promising itself secrecy in sin, and impunity or escape after it. For these two reach and remove all a man's fears, by giving him security against those two grand terrifying effects of sin, shame and pain. Assure but the sinner, that he shall neither be discovered nor punished, and presently the reins lie loose upon all his appetites; and they are free to take their full swing in all enormities whatsoever. But yet, since this is not to be effected without the help of some arguments and considerations, which may have something of show, at least, to delude, though nothing of strength to convince the reason; therefore,

II. We shall now, under our next head, endeavour to give some account of those *fallacious grounds upon which the sinner is apt to take up such a confidence*, as to believe that he shall be able to carry off his sin clear, without either discovery or retribution. And, no doubt, weak and shallow enough we shall find them all: and such as could never persuade any man to sin, did not his own love to sin persuade him much more forcibly than all such considerations; some of which are these that follow. As,

1. Men consider the success which they have actually had in the commission of many sins; and this proves an encouraging argument to them to commit the same for the future: as naturally suggesting this to their thoughts, that what they have done so often, without either discovery or punishment, may be so done by them again. For nothing does so much confirm a man in the continuance of any practice, as frequent experience of success in what he does; the proper genuine result of this being confidence.

Some men indeed stumble in their very first entrance upon a sinful course; and this their disappointment frequently proves their cure, by making them to retreat and draw off timely, as being disheartened with so unfortunate a beginning. And it is, no doubt, the singular mercy and indulgence of God to such, thus to cross and turn them out of the paths of destruction; which had they found smooth, safe, and pleasurable, the corruption of their hearts would have infallibly engaged them in them to their lives' end. That traveller, surely, has but little cause to com-

plain, who by breaking a leg, or an arm, at his first setting out upon an unfortunate journey, prevents the losing of his head at his journey's end; it being but a very uncomfortable way of travelling, to finish one's journey and one's life together. Great reason, therefore, have they to own themselves particularly favoured by Providence, who have been stopped and withstood by it, in the very first attempts of any sin, and thereby snatched, as it were a brand, out of the fire, or, which is yet better, have been kept from ever falling into it: their being scorched has prevented their being burnt: while the fright, caused by the danger they so narrowly escaped, has been always fresh upon their memories: and such as come to be thus happily frightened into their wits, are not so easily fooled out of them again. In short, all frustration in the first essays of a vicious course, is a balk to the confidence of the bold undertaker. And therefore, on the contrary, when God is pleased to leave a man under the full sway and power of any vice, he does not concern his providence to lay any block or impediment in such a one's way, but suffers him to go on and succeed in his villany, to effect all his projects, and compass the full satisfaction of his lewd desires. And this flushes him up, and makes him hard and insensible; and that makes him venturous and daring: and so locks him fast in the embraces of his sin, while he has not the least surmise of the sadness of the issue, and that the present sweets of sin will and must be bitterness in the end: but like a sot in a tavern, first drinks himself drunk, and then forgets that there is a reckoning to be paid.

Such a one the devil accounts he has fast enough; and for that cause none shall so studiously endeavour to promote a man's quiet and success in sin, as he, who at present tempts him to it, and will hereafter torment him for it. For the devil desires not that the sinner should feel any trouble for sin, till he comes to feel it for good and all in that place which is designed only for payment and not amendment; and where all that he can do or suffer to eternal ages can contribute nothing to his release. And therefore, that the sinner may sleep on soundly in his sin, the devil will be sure to make his bed soft enough. It is said of the Spaniard, that there are two things much accounted of and desired by many in the world, which yet he heartily wishes his enemy; one is, that if he be a gamester, he may win; the other, that if he be a courter of women, he may obtain his desires; for that he knows well enough, that either of these courses will, in all likelihood, prove his undoing in the long run. In like manner, when the devil has the management of a sinner, he will spread his wing over him so, that he shall never be alarmed with dangers, disgraces, and other calamitous effects of sin (if the officious tempter can ward them off,) but shall pursue his vice with ease, safety, and reputation.

And while the sinner can do so, such is the proneness of man

by nature to deceive himself in a thing which he passionately desires, that having thus acquitted himself to himself, he takes it for granted that God will acquit him too; and, like our late sanctified, and since justified rebels, concludes that God and he, forsooth, are still of a mind: in Eccles. viii. 11, "Because," says the wise man, "sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Here he gives us an account of the secret reasoning of most sinners' hearts; namely, that because God does not confound them in the very act of sin, by some immediate judgment, therefore they resolve upon a more audacious progress in it; and so sing Agag's requiem to themselves, that "surely the bitterness of death is past:" but much surer will such find it, that no man's being past fear, makes him past feeling too; nor that the distance of an evil abates the certainty of it. And yet the great knower of hearts ascribes men's resolution to such reasonings as these (as sottish and absurd as they are): so that in Psalm l., having reckoned up several flagitious practices, he adds, in ver. 21, "These things thou hast done, and I kept silence, and thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself." God's silence, it seems, passes with such for his consent, and his not attacking the guilty wretch by a present execution, makes him conclude that Heaven has passed an act of oblivion upon his rogueries, so that henceforth he shall live and die a prosperous indemnified villain, and his sin never find him out. In which case, certainly for a sinner thus to presume to absolve himself from his own sins, is itself a greater sin than any of those which he can pretend to absolve himself from. But,

2. A second ground, upon which men are apt to persuade themselves that they shall escape the stroke of divine justice for their sins, is their observation of the great and flourishing condition of some of the topping sinners of the world. They have seen perjury and murder nestle themselves into a throne, live triumphant, and die peaceably; and this makes them question whether God will ever concern himself to revenge that hereafter, which he seems so much to connive at and countenance here; especially since men are so generally apt to judge of things and persons according to the present face and appearance of them; that they make the present the sole measure of the future, guide their hopes and their fears by what they actually see and feel; and in a word, make their outward senses the rule and ground of their inmost ratiocinations.

For could we hear the secret language of most men's thoughts, we should hear them making such kind of answers and replies to the checks of conscience dissuading them from sin, and laying the danger of it before them, as these: Pray, what mischief befell such an oppressor, such a tyrant, or such a rebel? And who passed his life with more affluence and jollity, than such an

epicure, such a money-monger, such a tally-broker, and cheater of the public? And have not some dexterous accountants got estates and made their fortunes by a clever stroke or two of their pen? and by a skilful mistake, written themselves forty or fifty thousand pounds richer than they were before, in a trice? And did not that discreet Roman, Verres, lighting into a wealthy province, plunder and carry off from thence enough to serve himself, his friends, and his judges too? And why may not others, whose parts lie the same way, follow such lucky examples; and the thriving hypocrites of the present age find as fair quarter from God and man, as any of the former? With such considerations as these (if they may be called so), men commonly arm themselves against all the threatenings of the divine judgments; and think that in the strength of them they can warrant the most resolute pursuit of their vices for safe and rational. They see not the smoke of the bottomless pit, and so dread not the fire.

Flourishing sinners are indeed plausible arguments to induce men to sin: but, thanks be to God, that for a sinner to spend and end his days flourishing, is a privilege allowed by him to very few; and those only such as are likely to be much lower in the other world, than ever they were high in this. But,

3. As we have shown how mightily men are heartened on to their sins, by the successful examples of others as bad as themselves or perhaps worse; so the next ground upon which such are wont to promise themselves security, both from the discovery and punishment of their sins, is the opinion which they have of their own singular art and cunning to conceal them from the knowledge, or, at least, of their power to rescue them from the jurisdiction of any earthly judge. The eye of man, they know, is but of a weak sight and a short reach; so that he neither sees in the dark, nor pierces into the cabinet council and corner practices of his neighbours; and therefore, these sons of darkness, who love to work, as well as walk in the dark, doubt not, but to contrive and cast the commission of their villanies under such sure coverts of secrecy, that they shall be able to laugh at all judges and witnesses, and defy the inspection of the most curious and exact inquirers. And this makes them proceed to sin with such bravadoes in their hearts as these: Who shall ever see, or hear, or know what I do? The sun itself, the eye of the world, shall never be conscious to my actions; even the light and the day shall be strangers to my retirements. So that, unless the stones I tread upon cry out against me, and the beam out of the wall accuse, and my own clothes arraign me, I fear no discovery. This is the language, these the inward boasts of secret, or rather self-befooled sinners.

But now, what if such strange things as these should sometimes come to pass? and it should so fall out, as it will appear

by and by, that even these dumb, inanimate things are sometimes unaccountably enabled to clamour and depose against the guilty wretch: so that to the amazement of the world, he is drawn forth into public view out of all his lurking holes and pavilions of darkness? Why then, upon such surprising accidents as these, some have yet a further asylum to fly to, and reckon that their power and interest shall protect them; and so secure the sinner, notwithstanding the discovery of the sin. And the truth is, if matters stand so with them, that the height of their condition equals the height of their crimes, what care such ungodly great ones, whether or no their sins are known, so long as their persons must not be touched? No, so far are such from excusing or covering their lawless practices, that they choose rather to own and wear them in the eye of the world, as badges of their power, and marks of such a greatness as has set itself above the reach of either shame or fear; even treason itself dreads not a discovery, if the overgrown traitor be but mighty enough to bear it out; but it shall walk abroad openly, and look the world in the face undauntedly, with all the consciousness of a clamorous guilt, and yet with the confidence of innocence itself. For we must know, that it is not mere guilt, but guilt weak and disarmed, which exposes an offender to the merits of his offence; they are only the *minorum gentium malefici*, malefactors of a lower form, who break the law and are hanged for it. Whereas, let a crime be never so foul and so notorious, yet if the wary criminal has so armed and encompassed himself with friends and money, as to stave off all approaches of justice, howsoever his sin may find him out, yet he persuades himself that his punishment cannot; and that is as much as he cares for. For a man's debts will never fright him, if the officer dares not arrest him; and he will hardly fear breaking the law, who knows that he can trample upon it too. But,

4. The fourth and last ground which I shall mention of men's promising themselves security from the punishment of their sins, is a strong presumption that they shall be able to repent, and make their peace with God when they please; and this, they fully reckon, will keep them safe, and effectually shut the door against their utmost fears, as being a reach beyond them all. For let a man be never so deeply possessed with a belief of God's sin-revenging justice, never so much persuaded, that all the wrath which the curse of the law can threaten or inflict is most certainly entailed, not upon sin only in general, but also upon his own sin in particular; nay, let damnation be always present to his thoughts, and the fire of hell continually flaming in his apprehensions; yet all this shall not be able to take him off from his resolution to sin, and his confidence of escape, because he has an argument in reserve, which he thinks will answer all, to wit, an after-repentance. For if this shall interpose between the

commission of sin and the punishment of it, he concludes, upon the stock of all God's promises to the penitent, that he is past danger; and consequently has outwitted the law and the curse, and so stands *rectus in curia*, in spite of all the threatenings of death and damnation.

And as he thus reckons that repentance will secure him, so he doubts not but he can command that when he will; as, according to the doctrine of Pelagius, and his modern admired followers, he certainly may; repentance, in their divinity, being a work entirely in the power of the sinner's will. So that now the sinner's main business must be to time his repentance artificially, and to retreat opportunely before the hand of vengeance be actually upon him: and if he can but prevent, and be too nimble for that, why then he comes off clear and successful, with flying colours, having enjoyed the pleasures and advantages of his sin, without enduring any thing of the smart or sad consequences of the same.

But now, how wretched an inference this is, for any man to form to himself, and thereby to mock and defy Heaven! and yet how deep it lies in the hearts of most sinners may easily be observed by men of sense; and will be sadly rued by such as are not so, when it is too late. For this is manifestly the great fort and castle, the citadel and strong tower, which the soul has built to itself, to repair to, whensoever it has a mind to sin both with delight and security too. And were it not for this, it would be impossible for any considering man to satisfy himself in his continuance in any known sin for one moment. For he could not, with any consistence with that mighty overruling principle of self-preservation, commit a sin, if he assuredly knew or believed that he should be damned for it; which yet, since the infinitely just and true God has most peremptorily decreed and threatened, unless repentance shall intervene, it is evident that his whole refuge must lie in the intervention of that; which also he persuades himself shall, in due time, step in between him and the fatal blow. And this very consideration utterly evacuates the terrifying force of the divine threatening; and by promising the sinner a fair issue of things both here and hereafter, makes the poor self-deluding and deluded creature conclude that his sin shall never find him out.

And thus having shown some of those fallacious grounds, upon which men use to build their confidence of the concealment, or at least of the impunity of their sins; I proceed now to the

III. And last general head at first proposed by us: which was to show *the vanity of such a confidence*, by declaring those several ways by which, in the issue, it comes certainly to be defeated; and that both with reference to this world and the next. And

1. For this world ; there are various ways by which it comes to be disappointed here : as,

(1.) The very confidence itself of secrecy is a direct and natural cause of the sinner's discovery. For confidence in such cases causes a frequent repetition of the same action ; and if a man does a thing frequently, it is odds but some time or other he is discovered : for by this he subjects himself to so many more accidents : every one of which may possibly betray him. He who has escaped in many battles, has yet been killed in the issue ; and by playing too often in the mouth of death has been snapped by it at last.

- Add to this, that confidence makes a man venturous, and venturousness casts him into the high road of danger, and the very arms of destruction. For while a man ventures, he properly shuts the eyes of his reason. And he who shuts his own eyes lies so much the more open to those of other men.

(2.) There is sometimes a strange, providential concurrence of unusual, unlikely accidents, for the discovery of great sins ; a villany committed perhaps but once in an age, comes sometimes to be found out also by such an accident as scarce happens above once in an age. For there are some sins more immediately invading the great interests of society, government, and religion, which Providence sets itself in a more peculiar manner to detect and bring to light, in spite of all the coverings which art or power can cast over them : such as are murder, perjury, and sacrilege (all of them accounted sins of the foulest guilt before forty-one, but marks of regeneration with many ever since) : and more particularly for murder ; in what a strange, stupendous manner does Providence oftentimes trace it out ; though concealed with all the closeness which guilt and skill, and the legerdemain of a well packed and paid jury can secure it by !

Such small, such contemptible, and almost unobservable hints have sometimes unravelled and thrown open the contexture of the deepest laid villainies, and delivered the murderer into the hands of justice, by means which seemed almost as much above nature, as the sin committed was against it.

And the like instances might be given in many other crying sins, which sometimes cry so long, and so loud too, that they come at length to be seen as well as heard, and to alarm the earth as well as pierce heaven. "Curse not the king, no, not in thy heart," says the wise man, in Eccles. x. 20 ; "for a bird in the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter ;" though some, I confess, are of opinion that such as have no wings, are much nimbler and quicker in carrying and telling these matters than such as have. But to keep to these remarkable words now before us ; if the bird upon the house-top (as the text seems to intimate) shall be able, in such a case as this, to tell what is done or whispered within the house ;

and these inhabitants of the air shall have keys to our chambers and our closets, nay, and to our very hearts too; how can there be such a thing in the world as secresy? (as the truth is, setting aside all tropes and hyperboles, there is but very little :) and then if such informers as these find out the treason, we may be sure that the treason itself will not fail to find out the traitor.

For let a criminal seem never so safe in his own thoughts, and in the thoughts of all about him, yet still he must know that the justice of God has him in chase, and will one day show that it never hunts surer than when the politicians of the world think it upon a cold scent. For how many strange, intricate, and perplexed villanies have been ripped up, and spread far and near, which the subtle actors of them, both before, and in, and after the commission, fully believed could not possibly be discovered. Whereas on the contrary, it is most certain that no man, though never so crafty and sagacious, can propose to himself such great unlikelihoods for the discovery of any action, but others, altogether as crafty, have actually failed and miscarried under the very same or greater.

And therefore the psalmist, most appositely to our present purpose, observes, Psalm xxxvi. 2, that the sinner "flatters himself in his own eyes, till his iniquity be found out : " that is the issue; and no wonder if such a practice comes to such an end.

For whomsoever flatters himself, cheats and betrays himself by false reasonings; and by not dealing clearly and impartially with himself, but grounding his presumption of secresy upon arguments represented to him much firmer and stronger, than his own experience, severely judging, would allow them to be. For if such a one finds an accident highly improbable, he will presently screw it up, from thence, to impossible, and then conclude, that in so vast a number of contingencies, one of a million shall never hit his case. And very probably it may not. But what if it should? Why then, one such unlucky event will fully pay the reckoning for all former escapes; and one treason or felony discovered, will as certainly bring his neck to the block or the halter, as a thousand, were they all of them crowded together into one and the same indictment against him.

(3.) God sometimes makes one sin the means of discovering another; it often falling out with two vices, as with two thieves or rogues; of whom it is hard to say which is worse, and yet one of them may serve well enough to betray and find out the other. How many have by their drunkenness disclosed their thefts, their lusts, and murders, which might have been buried in perpetual silence, had not the sottish committers of them buried their reason in their cups? For the tongue is then got loose from its obedience to reason, and commanded at all adventures by the fumes of a distempered brain and a roving imagination; and so presently pours forth whatsoever they shall suggest to it,

sometimes casting away life, fortune, reputation, and all in a breath.

And how does the confident sinner know but the grace of God, which he has so often affronted and abused, may some time or other desert, and give him up to the sordid temptations of the jug and the bottle, which shall make the doors of his heart fly open, and cause his own tongue to give in evidence against him, for all the villanies which had lain so long heaped up and concealed in his guilty breast? For let no man think that he has the secrets of his own mind in his own power, while he has not himself so; as it is most certain that he has not, who is actually under a debauch: for this confounds and turns all the faculties of the soul topsy-turvy; like a storm tossing and troubling the sea, till it makes all the foul, black stuff, which lay at the bottom, to swim and roll upon the top.

In like manner, the drunken man's heart floats upon his lips, and his inmost thoughts proclaim and write themselves upon his forehead; and therefore, as it is a usual, and indeed a very rational saying, that "a liar ought to have a good memory;" so upon the like account, a person of great guilt ought to be also a person of great sobriety; lest otherwise his very soul should, some time or other, chance to be poured out with his liquor: for commonly the same hand which pierces the vessel, broaches the heart also, and it is no strange nor unusual passage from the tavern to the gaol.

(4.) God sometimes infatuates and strikes the sinner with frenzy, and such a distraction, as causes him to reveal all his hidden baseness, and to blab out such truths as will be sure to be revenged upon him who speaks them. In a word, God blasts and takes away his understanding, for having used it so much to the dishonour of him who gave it; and delivers him over to a sort of madness, too black and criminal to be allowed any refuge in bedlam. And for this, there have been several fearful instances of such wretched contemners of Heaven, as having, for many years, outfaced all the world, both about them and above them too, with a solemn look and a demure countenance, have yet, at length, had their loathsome inside turned outwards, and been made an abhorred spectacle to men and angels. For it is but just with God, when men have debauched their consciences, to bereave them of their senses also; and to disturb and disarm their reason so as to disable it from standing upon its guard, even by that last and lowest sort of self-defence, the keeping of its own counsel; for no chains will hold a madman's tongue, no fetters can restrain the ramble of his discourse, nor bind any one faculty of his soul or body to its good behaviour: but all that is within him is promiscuously thrown out; and his credit, with all that is dear to him, is at the mercy of this unruly member, as St. James calls it, which, in the present case, has no mercy upon him whom it belongs to; nor any

thing to govern it, but a violent, frantic humour, wholly unable to govern itself.

(5.) God sometimes lets loose the sinner's conscience upon him, filling it with such horror for sin, as renders it utterly unable to bear the burden it labours under, without publishing, or rather proclaiming it to the world.

For some sorts of sin there are, which will lie burning and boiling in the sinner's breast, like a kind of Vesuvius, or fire pent up in the bowels of the earth; which yet must and will, in spite of all obstacles, force its way out of it at length; and thus, in some cases of sin, the anguish of the mind grows so exceeding fierce and intolerable, that it finds no rest within itself, but is even ready to burst, till it is delivered of the swelling secret it labours with: such kind of guilt being to the conscience like some offensive meats to the stomach, which no sooner takes them in, but it is in pain and travail till it throws them out again.

Who knows the force, the power, and the remorseless rage of conscience, when God commissions it to call the sinner to an account? how strangely it would sift and winnow all his retirements? how terribly it will wring and torture him, till it has bolted out the hidden guilt which it was in search of! All which is so mighty an argument of the prerogative of God over men's hearts, that no malefactor can be accounted free, though in his own keeping, nor any one concealed, though never so much out of sight; for still God has his serjeant or officer in the sinner's breast; who will be sure to attack him as soon as ever the great Judge shall but give the word: an officer so strictly true to his trust, that he is neither to be softened nor sweetened; neither to be begged nor bought off; nor consequently, in a word, fit to be of the jury, when a rich or potent malefactor comes to be tried, in hopes to be brought off.

And this also shows the great importance and wisdom of that advice of Pythagoras, namely, that every man, when he is about to do a wicked action, should, above all things in the world, stand in awe of himself, and dread the witness within him; who sits there as a spy over all his actions, and will be sure, one day or other, to accuse him to himself; and perhaps put him upon such a rack, as shall make him accuse himself to others too.

For this is no new thing, but an old experimented case; there having been several in the world, whose conscience has been so much too hard for them, that it has compelled them to disclose a villanous fact, even with the gibbet and the halter set before their eyes; and to confess their guilt, though they saw certain and immediate death the reward of that confession.

But most commonly has conscience this dismal effect upon great sinners, at their departure out of this world; at which time some feel themselves so horribly stung with the guilty sense of

some frightful sin, that they cannot die with any tolerable peace till they have revealed it; finding it some small relief, it seems, and easement of their load, to leave the knowledge of their sin behind them, though they carry the guilt of it along with them.

(6.) And lastly, God sometimes takes the work of vengeance upon himself, and immediately, with his own arm, repays the sinner by some notable judgment from heaven: sometimes, perhaps, he strikes him dead suddenly; and sometimes he smites him with some loathsome disease (which will hardly be thought the *gout*, whatsoever it may be called); and sometimes, again, he strangely blasts him in his name, family, or estate, so that all about him stand amazed at the blow; but God and the sinner himself know well enough the reason and the meaning of it too.

Justice, we know, uses to be pictured blind, and therefore it finds out the sinner, not with its eyes, but with its hands; not by seeing, but by striking: and it is the honour of the great attribute of God's justice, which he thinks so much concerned, to give some pledge or specimen of itself upon bold sinners in this world; and so to assure them of a full payment hereafter, by paying them something in the way of earnest here.

And the truth is, many and marvellous have been the instances of God's dealing in this manner, both with cities and whole nations. For when a guilt has spread itself so far as to become national, and grown to such a bulk as to be too big for all control of law, so that there seems to be a dispute whether God or sin governs the world; surely it is then high time for God to do his own work with his own hand, and to assert his prerogative against the impudent defiers of it, by something every whit as signal and national as the provocation given; whether it be by war, plague, or fire (all which we have been visited with, though neither corrected nor changed by); and to let the common nuisances of the age, the professed enemies of virtue and religion, and the very blots and scandal of human nature itself know, that there still remains upon them a flaming guilt to account for, and a dreadful Judge to account to.

And thus I have gone over several of those ways by which a man's sin overtakes and finds him out in this world. As first, the very confidence itself of secrecy is a direct and natural cause of the sinner's discovery. Secondly, there is sometimes a strange, providential concurrence of unusual, unlikely accidents, for the bringing to light great villanies. Thirdly, God sometimes makes one great sin a means to detect and lay open another. Fourthly, God sometimes infatuates and strikes the sinner with frenzy, and such a distraction as makes him reveal all his hidden guilt. Fifthly, God sometimes lets loose the sinner's conscience upon him, so that he can find no rest within himself, till he has confessed and declared his sin. Sixthly and lastly, God sometimes

smites and confounds him by some notable, immediate judgment from heaven.

These, I say, are some of the chief ways by which God finds out the sinner in this life. But what now, if none of all these should reach his case, but that he carries his crimes all his life closely, and ends that quietly; and perhaps in the eye of the world, honourably too; and so has the good luck to have his shame cast into and covered under the same ground with his carcass? Why yet, for all this, the man has not escaped; but his guilt still haunts and follows him into the other world, where there can be no longer a concealment of it; but it must inevitably find him out. For as it is in Daniel, ch. vii. ver. 10, "When the judgment shall be set, the books shall be also opened;" even those doomsday books (as I may so call them) wherein God has kept a complete register of all the villanies that were ever committed against him, which then shall be displayed and read aloud in the audience of that great and terrible court. The consideration of which, surely, may well put those excellent words of the apostle in Rom. vi. 21, with this little alteration of them, into our mouths. "What fruit can we [now] have of those things, whereof we shall [then] be ashamed?" So, what advantage of pleasure, profit, or honour, can the sinner promise to himself from any sin, which may be laid in the balance against that infinite and incredible weight of reproach, with which it will certainly pay him home at that day?

For, could he persuade the mountains to cover him, or could he hide himself in the bosom of the great deep, or could he wrap himself up in the very darkness of hell; yet still his sin would fetch him out of all, and present him naked, open, and defenceless before that fiery tribunal, where he must receive the sentence of everlasting confusion; and where the devil himself will be sure to do him justice, as never failing to be a most liberal rewarder of all his pimps and vassals, for the secret service done him in this world.

And now what is the whole foregoing discourse, but a kind of panegyric (such a mean one as it is) upon that glorious thing innocence? I say innocence, which makes that man's face shine in public, whose actions and behaviour it governs in private. For the innocent person lives not under the continual torment of doubts and fears, lest he should be discovered; for the light is his friend, and to be seen and looked upon is his advantage: the most retired parts of his life being like jewels; which though indeed most commonly kept locked up in the cabinet, yet are then most admired and valued, when shown and set forth by the brightness of the sun, as well as by their own.

How poor a thing secrecy is to corrupt a rational man's behaviour, has been sufficiently declared already, by the survey which we have taken of those several ways whereby the most

wise and just Governor of the world is pleased to defeat and befool the confidence of the subtlest and the slyest sinners. We have seen also what paper walls such persons are apt to enclose themselves with; and how slight, thin, and transparent all their finest contrivances of secrecy are; while, notwithstanding all the private recesses and dark closets which they so much trust in, the windows of heaven are still open over their heads: and now, what should the consideration of all this do, but every minute of our lives reminds us so to behave ourselves as under the eye of that God, who sees in secret, and will reward us openly?

To whom be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON IX.

THE RECOMPENCE OF THE REWARD.

[Preached before the University in Christ Church, Oxford, Sept. 11, 1698.]

HEBREWS XI. 24—26.

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter : choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season ; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt : for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

THIS chapter exhibits to us a noble and victorious army of saints, together with an account of those heroic actions and exploits which they were renowned for in their several ages ; and have been since transmitted such to posterity : as that they subdued kingdoms, wrought wonders, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire ; and, in a word, triumphed over the cruellest and bitterest persecutions. And the great spring or principle which, in spite of all their enemy's power and their own weakness, bore them up to these high achievements, is not obscurely intimated in the person of Moses, to have been "a respect to the recompence of reward." Thus, as it were, fastening one hand upon the promise, and turning about the world with the other.

A due consideration of which ground and motive of action in so great a person and so authentic an example of sanctity, as Moses was, may justly make us wonder at that strange proposition, or rather paradox, which has, for so long a time, passed current with too many ; namely, that a Christian, in all acts of duty, ought to sequester his mind from all respect to an ensuing reward, and to commence his obedience wholly and entirely upon the love of duty itself, abstracted from all regard to any following advantages whatsoever. And that to do otherwise is to act as a slave, and not as a son ; a temper of mind which will certainly embase and discommend all our services to the acceptance of almighty God.

This is a glorious speech, I confess, and to the angels, to the cherubims and seraphims, perhaps practicable ; whose natures being so different from, and so much superior to ours, may, for ought we know, have as different and superior a way of acting too. But then we are to consider that even that known and so

much celebrated aphorism, which this assertion is manifestly founded upon, to wit, that 'virtue is its own reward,' will, upon examination, be found true only in a limited sense. That is to say, in respect of a sufficiency of worth in it to deserve our choice, but not in respect of a sufficiency of power actually to engage our choice. For such a sufficiency it has not; and, consequently, if taken in this sense, and applied to men in their natural estate, though under any height or elevation of piety whatsoever, it is so far from being the true and refined sense of the gospel, as some pretend, that it is really absurd in reason; and, I suppose, that to demonstrate it not to be evangelical, there needs no other course to be taken than to prove it to be irrational. And this, by God's assistance, I shall endeavour to do in the following discourse. The foundations of which I shall lay in these four previous propositions:

1. That the gospel, or doctrine of Christianity, does not change, and much less destroy or supersede, the natural way of the soul's acting.

2. That it is natural for the soul, in the way of inclination and appetite, to be moved only by such objects as are in themselves desirable.

3. That as it is natural for the soul to be thus moved only by things desirable, so it is equally natural to it to be moved by them only in that degree and proportion in which they are desirable: and consequently in the

4. And last place, that whatsoever is proposed as a motive or inducement to any action, ought for that reason to be in a higher degree desirable, and to have in it a greater fitness to move and affect the will, than the action itself, to which it is proposed as a motive. For otherwise it would be superfluous, and indeed, no additional motive to it at all; forasmuch as the bare action, so considered, would be as strong an argument to a man to perform it, as such a motive, being but in the same degree desirable, could be to induce him to it.

Now these four propositions, fully weighed and put together, will amount to a clear proof of that which I first intended to prove. For to be moved by rewards, belongs not to a man properly as corrupt or depraved in his nature through the fall, but simply as he is a man; a creature endued with the faculties of understanding and will: and, therefore, since the gospel, as we have shown, entrenches not upon the natural way of the soul's working, it follows that neither under the gospel can it be unlawful to engage in duty from a respect to a future recompence. And moreover, since it is natural to the will to be more moved by that which is in itself more desirable; and since that which is given as a motive to any action, ought to be in itself more desirable than that action; and lastly, since God proposes rewards, as such motives to the actions of duty and obedience, it roundly

follows, that it is not only lawful, in the matter of obedience, to have "respect to the recompence of reward," but also, that according to the natural order of human acting, the soul should have respect to that in the first place; and then, being animated and enlivened thereby, should respect the works of duty and obedience in the next.

But to bring things into a narrower compass, and so both to prosecute the subject more fully, and to represent it more clearly; I shall reduce what I have to say upon it into these two propositions:

I. That in the actions of duty, considered barely as duty, or as morally good, and fit to be done, there is not a sufficient motive to engage the will of man in a constant practice of them.

II. That the proposal of a reward on God's part, and a respect had to it on man's, are certainly necessary to engage men in such a course of duty and obedience.

This proposition naturally and unavoidably issues from the former; and accordingly, we shall consider both of them in their order.

I. And for the first of them, to wit, *that duty, considered barely as duty, does not carry in it a sufficient motive to engage the will of man in the constant practice of it.* And this I shall endeavour to make out by these following reasons: as 1. If in the soul of man its averseness to duty be much greater and stronger than its inclination to it, then duty, considered barely in itself, is not sufficient to determine the will of man to the constant performance of it; which, in my judgment, is an argument so forcible and clear, that one of greater force and clearness cannot well be desired. For unless hatred must pass for courtship, and hostility for allurement, certainly that from which the will is so averse cannot be a proper means to win upon it, or to get into its embraces. No; sooner may the fire be attracted by the centre of the earth, or the vine clasp about the bramble, than any faculty of the soul have its inclinations drawn forth by a contrary and distasteful object.

And then for the ground of this argument, to wit, *that the soul has originally such an averseness to duty: this, I suppose, is but too evident to need any further probation.* For that horrid proneness of man's will to all vice, that inundation of lewdness, which with such an unresisted facility, or rather such an uncontrolled predominance, has spread itself over the whole world, is a sad but full eviction of this fatal truth. For what mean all those hard restraints and shackles put upon us in our minority? What are those several arts of discipline and education, those early preventions, but so many banks, as it were, raised up to keep that sea of impurity, that swells within our nature, from pouring itself forth into actual enormities upon

every occasion? How hardly is the restive, unruly will of man first tamed and broken to duty! How exceeding hardly are its native reluctancies mastered and subdued to the sober rules of morality! Duty carries with it a grim and a severe aspect; and the very nature of it involves difficulty. And difficulty, certainly, is no very apt thing to ingratiate or endear itself to men's practices or affections. Nay, so undeniable is the truth of this, that the very scene of virtue is laid in our natural averseness to things excellent and praiseworthy. For virtue is properly a force upon appetite, the conquest of an inclination, and the powerful bending of the mind to unusual choices and preternatural courses: so that, indeed, to live virtuously, is to swim against the stream; to be above the pleasures of sense, and, in a word, to be good in spite of inclination.

And upon this account alone it is, that virtue carries so high a price in the world, and that it attracts such a mighty esteem and value, both to itself and to him who has it, and that even from those who have it not. For if to lie abed, to fare deliciously, and to flow with all sorts of delight and plenty, were to be virtuous, there could be no more commendation due to a virtuous person, than to one who had pleased his palate, fed lustily, and slept well. But nothing easy ever did or will draw after it either applause or admiration. No, these are things which wait only upon the painful, the active, and laborious; upon those who both do and undergo such things as the rest of mankind are unwilling and afraid to meddle with; and that gives them fame, and renown, and lustre in the eyes of the world round about them: for to reconcile ease and splendour together is impossible; and not only the course of providence, but the very nature of things protests against it. And therefore, the paths of virtue must needs lie through craggy rocks and precipices; its very food is abstinence; it is cherished with industry and self-denial; it is exercised and kept in heart with arduous attempts and hard services; and if it were otherwise, it could neither be high, nor great, nor honourable, nor indeed so much as virtue.

But now, if this be the natural complexion of virtue and duty, by such terrifying severities to raise in the soul a kind of horror of it and aversion to it, let this be the first reason why duty, considered barely in itself and abstracted from all reward, is not sufficient to engage men in the practice of it. Next to which,

2. The second reason, for the proof of the same truth, is this, that those affections and appetites of the soul, which have the strongest influence upon it, to incline and bias it in all its choices, to wit, the appetites belonging properly to the sensitive part of man's nature, are not at all moved or gratified by any thing in duty, considered barely as duty, and therefore, as so considered,

is not a sufficient motive to induce men to the practice of it. Now this reason also, I conceive, carries its own evidence with it. For the soul of man, as the present state of nature is, generally moves as those forementioned appetites and affections shall incline it; and therefore, if that which thus inclines it be not some way or other first made sure of, all persuasions addressed immediately to the will itself, are like to find but a very cold reception.

I shall not here insist upon the division of the appetites of the soul into the rational and sensitive, the superior and inferior, and much less shall I trace them into any further subdivisions: but shall only observe, that there is one general, comprehensive appetite, or rather *ratio appetendi*, common to all the particular appetites, and into which the several operations of each of them are resolved; and that is, the great appetite of *jucundum*, or tendency of the whole soul to that which pleases. For whether they be properly the desires of the rational part, or the desires and inclinations of the sensitive, they all concur and meet in this, that they tend to and terminate in something that may please and delight them.

But now I have already shown, that bare duty and virtue are rather attended with difficulty and hardship, than seasoned and set off with pleasure; and for that cause, are commonly looked upon but as dry things; and consequently such as need to have something of relish put into them; by the assignation of a pleasing reward; which may so recommend and gild the bitter pill, as to reconcile it to this great appetite, and thereby convey and slide it into the will, as a proper object of its choice.

Nay, and I shall proceed further, and add, that duty, upon these grounds, is then most effectually proposed, when it is not only seconded with a reward, but also with a reward sensibly represented; and, so far as the nature of the thing will bear, with all the conditions of allurements and delight; that so it may be able to counterbalance the contrary suggestions of sense, which beat so strongly upon the imagination. Upon which account, as Moses enforced the observation of his law upon the Israelites, by rewards most suitable and adapted to sense, as consisting of temporal promises; (though couching under them, I confess, spiritual and more sublime things;) so Christ himself, though the rewards promised by him to his followers were all of them heavenly and spiritual, yet he vouchsafed oftentimes to express them by such objects as most affected the sense. As for instance: the enjoyments of the other world are shadowed and set forth to us in the gospel by "drinking wine in the kingdom of heaven," Luke xxii. 18: and by the mirth and festivities of a marriage feast, Matt. xxii. 4; also by sitting upon thrones, Matt. xix. 28; likewise by dwelling in palaces adorned with pearls and diamonds, and all kind of precious stones, Rev. xxi. 19, 20, 21; and lastly by the continual singing of triumphal songs, Rev. xv. 3, xix. 1.

All which are some of the most lively and exalted instances of pleasure that fall within the enjoyment of sense in this world.

And this way of expression was most wisely made use of by our Saviour, for that the pleasures of the sensitive inferior appetites, though they are not in themselves the best objects, yet are certainly the best representations and conveyances of such objects to the mind; since without some kind of sensible dress, things too fine for men's apprehensions can never much work upon their affections.

And upon the same ground we may observe also, that those virtues are the most generally and easily practised, which do least thwart and oppose these appetites. As for example, veracity, in speaking truth; faithfulness, in not violating a trust; and justice, in punishing offenders, or rendering to every one his due, are much more frequent in the world than temperance, sobriety, and chastity, and other such virtues as are properly conversant about abridging the pleasures of the senses.

So then, if this be the case, that the soul of man, in all its choices, is naturally apt to be determined by pleasure, and the sensitive inferior appetites, which would draw it off from duty, are continually plying it with such suitable and taking pleasures; doubtless, there is no way for duty to prevail and get ground of them, but by bidding higher, and offering the soul greater gratifications wrapped up in an eternal reward. For when an adversary is ready to bribe the judge, and the judge is as ready to be bribed; assuredly there is no way so likely to carry the cause, as to outbribe him. The sensitive part or principle in all the pressing, enticing offers it makes to the soul, must either be gained and taken off from alluring, or be conquered, and outdone in it. The former of which can never be effected, but the latter may; and that by no other means than by representing duty as clothed with such great and taking rewards, that the soul shall stand convinced that there will be really a greater and more satisfactory pleasure in the consequents of duty (how hard soever it may appear at present), than there can be in the freest and most unlimited fruition of the greatest sensual delights.

But now, should we proceed upon the contrary principle, requiring obedience without recompence, how lame and unsuccessful would every precept of the divine law prove, when thus proposed to us naked and stripped of all that may either strengthen or recommend it! Would not such a forlorn nakedness represent it as coming rather to beg than to command? and to ask an alms than to impose a duty? For suppose, that when God bids us fast and pray, abstain from all the allurements of sensual pleasure, deny ourselves, being smote upon one cheek, turn the other, and lastly, choose death, rather than commit the least known sin; suppose, I say, that God should command us all these severe things, upon no other account, but because they are excellent

actions, high strains of virtue, most pleasing to God, and upon that score both commanded by him, and to be performed by us: certainly these considerations (notwithstanding all the reason and truth that is in them) would yet strike the will but very faintly: for men care not for suffering, while they think it is only for suffering sake. And self-denial is but a sour morsel, and will hardly go down without something to sweeten it; and men, generally, have but a small appetite to pray, and a much smaller to fast, (how great soever they may have after it.) On the contrary therefore, let us, in this case, take our measures from the addresses made by our Saviour himself to the minds of men: "Blessed," says he to his disciples, "are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake; rejoice, and be exceeding glad." But why, I pray? Was it such matter of joy, either to be spit or trampled upon? to be aspersed by men's tongues, or crushed under their heels? No, certainly; but we have a very good reason given us for all this in the next words: "For great," says our Saviour, "is your reward in heaven," Matt. v. 12. And again, "Blessed are they that mourn." But surely not for the bare *flendi voluptas*; nor for any such great desirableness that there is or can be in tears or groans any more than in that which causes them; no, but for something else, that was abundantly able to make amends for all these sadnesses, in the 5th and 6th verses of the same chapter. "For such," says our Saviour, "shall be comforted:" which one word implies in it all the felicity and satisfaction that human nature is capable of. But now had our Saviour, in defiance of all their natural inclinations, pressed the austerities upon them, as the sole and sufficient reason and reward of themselves, surely he had done like one, who neither understood the nature of man's will, nor the true arts of persuasion. And the case had been much the same, as if Moses, instead of giving the Israelites water, had bid them quench their thirst with the rock. Let this, therefore, be the second reason, why duty, considered barely as duty, and abstracted from all reward, is not sufficient to induce men to the practice of it.

3. The third and last reason that I shall allege for the same is this: that if duty, considered barely in itself, ought to be the sole motive to duty, without any respect to a subsequent reward, then those two grand affections of hope and fear ought to have no influence upon men, so as to move or engage them to the acts of duty at all. The consequence is most clear; because the proper objects, upon which these affections are to be employed, are future rewards and future punishments; and therefore, if no regard ought to be had of these in matters of duty, it will follow, that neither must those affections, which are wholly conversant about rewards, have any thing to do about duty, wherein no considerations of a reward ought, upon this principle, to take place. This,

I say, would be the genuine, unavoidable consequence of this doctrine.

But now, should any one venture to own such an odd and absurd paradox, in any of those sober, rational parts of Christendom, which have not depraved their judging and discerning faculties with those strange, new-found, ecstatic notions of religion, which some (who call themselves Christians, and Christians of the highest form too) have, in the late super-reforming age, taken up amongst us: how unnatural, or rather indeed how romantic would such divinity appear! For all the world acknowledges, that hope and fear are the two great handles by which the will of man is to be taken hold of, when we would either draw it to duty, or draw it off from sin. They are the strongest and most efficacious means to bring such things home to the will as are principally apt to move and work upon it. And the greatest, the noblest, and most renowned actions, that were ever achieved upon the face of the earth, have first moved upon the spring of a projecting hope, carrying the mind above all present discouragements, by the prospect of some glorious and future good.

And therefore he, who, to bring men to do their duty heartily and vigorously, and to the best advantages of Christianity, shall cut off all rewards from it, and so remove the proper materials which hope should exert itself upon, does just as if a man should direct another to shoot right and true, by forbidding him to take aim at the mark; or, as if we should bring a man to a race, and first tie his legs fast, or cut them off, and then clap him on the back, and bid him run. He who takes away the incitements to duty, dashes the performance of duty, and not the performance only, but the very attempt also: for men do not use to run, only that they may run, but that they may obtain; labour itself being certainly one of the worst rewards of a man's pains. And therefore no wonder if every exhortation to virtue has just so much strength in it, as there is in the argument brought to enforce it. For, if we will be but true to the first principles of nature, we shall find, that all arguments made use of to persuade the mind of man, must be founded upon something that is grateful, acceptable, and pleasing to nature; and that, in short, is a man's easy and comfortable enjoyment of himself, in all the powers, faculties, and affections, both of his soul and body. Which said enjoyment in the hard and dry strokes of duty and spiritual day labour, as I may call it, I am sure is not to be found. For no man enjoys himself, while he is spending his spirits, and employing the utmost intentions of his mind upon such objects, as shall both put and keep it upon the stretch: which yet, in the performance of duty, every one actually does, or, at least, should do. In a word, irksomeness in the whole course of an action, and weariness after it, certainly are not fruition; but the actions of bare duty are naturally accompanied with both.

Let us, therefore, here once again observe the course taken by our Saviour himself, when he would raise men up to something singular and extraordinary, and above the common pitch of duty; as in Mark x. 21, we find, how he answered the rich young heir, inquiring of him the way to heaven: "Go," says he, "and sell whatsoever thou hast, and give it all to the poor." Now certainly, had our Saviour stopped here, this had been as grinding and as stripping a command, as could have well passed upon a man; and might indeed have seemed, not so much a command to prove, as an artifice to blow him up; not so much a test, to try his obedience, as a trick (like some oaths) to worm him out of his estate. But surely, our Saviour never affected to be king of beggars, and much less to make men beggars, the better to king it over them. Nor can we imagine, that he who was all wisdom and goodness, would have so far contradicted both, as to make it a duty to give alms, and at the same time put men into a condition fit only to receive them, or that he would have enjoined so great a paradox in practice, as to require his followers to choose poverty merely for poverty's sake; or to sell their possessions, only to buy hunger and rags, scorn and contempt with the price of them. No; assuredly, the God of nature would never have put a man upon any thing so contrary to the first principles of nature. And therefore our Saviour did not require this young man here absolutely to quit his riches, but only to exchange them, and to part with a less estate in possession, for a greater in reversion, with a small enjoyment for a vast hope, in those following words: "Do this," says he, "and thou shalt have treasure in heaven:" so that he proposed the duty in one word, and the reward in another. And it was this alone which made our Saviour's proposal (which looked so terribly at first) fair and rational; and which, without such a reward annexed to it, would, upon the strictest and most impartial discourses of reason and nature, have been thrown back as cruel and intolerable.

And again, when our Saviour preached to the world the grand evangelical duty "taking up the cross;" we do not find, that he made the mere burden of bearing it any argument for the taking it up: no, certainly, such arguments might have pressed hard upon their shoulders, but very little upon their reason. And therefore, in Mark x. 29, 30, "There is no man," says he, "who hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, and in the world to come eternal life." So that we see here the antecedent smoothed over, and recommended by the consequent; duty and reward walking hand in hand; the riches of the promise still over-matching the rigours of the precept, and (as we observe in the royal diadems of Christian kings) the cross and the crown put together.

But above all, the example of the great "author and finisher of our faith" himself will put the point here before us past all dispute. For are not "his enduring the cross and despising the shame" (and this latter as terrible a crucifixion to the mind, as the other could be to the body) both of them resolved into "the joy that was set before him?" Heb. xii. 2. And did not our Saviour teach us by his example, as well as by his precept? At least so far, that what he did was certainly lawful to be done; though, by reason of the immense disparity of his condition and ours, not always necessary for us to do. But however, as to the case now spoken of, it was manifestly the subsequent joy which baffled and disarmed the present pain, and the prospect of a glorious immortality, which carries him triumphantly through all those agonies which bare mortality must otherwise have sunk under.

It has been observed, and that with great wit and reason, that in all encounters of dangerous and dreadful issue, "it is still the eye which is first overcome;" and being so, presently spreads a terror throughout the whole man: accordingly, on the contrary, where the eye is emboldened with the encouraging view of some vast enjoyment, pressing close upon the heels of a present suffering, it diffuses such a noble bravery and courage into all the faculties, both of soul and body, as makes them overlook all dangers; and by overlooking, conquer and get above them. In a word, let us so eye "the great captain of our salvation," as to rest assured of this, that wheresoever he went before, it is both our privilege and our safety to follow: and that his example alone is enough both to justify and to glorify the imitation.

But to proceed. As we have shown how our Saviour has sometimes thought fit to draw men to their duty by their hopes, so let us see, in the next place, how he sometimes also drives them to it by their fears. "Fear not those," says he, "who can but kill the body, but fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell," Matt. x. 28. And again, in Luke xii. 5, he enforces the same words with this emphatical repetition; "Yea, I say unto you, Fear him." But now, if the fear of hell, influencing a man either to the practice of duty or the avoidance of sin, were the direct way to hell (as some with equal confidence and ignorance have affirmed), surely our Saviour took the most preposterous course that could be, to prescribe the fear of hell as the surest means to escape it. For how can there be any such thing as "fleeing from the wrath to come," if fear, which is the only thing that can make men flee, shall betray them into that which they flee from?

But further, to descend from the method used by Christ himself to that made use of by his apostles: what means St. Peter to put men upon "passing the time of their sojourning here in fear?" 1 Pet. i. 17; and St. Paul, to press men upon "working out their salvation with fear and trembling?" Phil. ii. 12. For

fear and trembling are certainly very senseless things, where a man is not at all the better for them. But these experienced guides, it seems, very well knew how impossible it was, where the concern was infinite and unspeakable, and the danger equal, for any man of sense and reason to shake off his fears, and retain his wits too. And therefore, to me it seems none of the smallest arguments against the modern whimsy, which we are now opposing, that both in the language of the Old Testament and the New, the whole business of religion is still comprehended and summed up in this one great thing, the fear of God. For this we may assure ourselves of, that he who fears as he should do in this world, shall have nothing either to fear or feel in the next.

And now, lastly, to set off the foregoing authorities with the manifest reason of the thing itself. It is doubtless one of the greatest absurdities than can well fall within the thoughts of man, to imagine that God, who has cast the business of man's salvation into so large a compass, as to share out to every other faculty and affection of the soul its due part and proportion in this great work, should yet wholly disinterest those two noble leading affections of hope and fear, from having any thing to do in the same. For must these only lie idle and fallow, while all the other affections of the mind are employed and taken up? And has God something for us to love, and something to hate, but in the whole business of religion, nothing for us to hope for, and nothing to fear? Which surely he has not, if it be absolutely unlawful for men under the gospel, in any religious performance, to act with an eye to a future recompence. And therefore, since this assertion, to wit, that duty, considered barely as duty, ought to be the sole motive to the practice of it, brings us under a necessity of asserting also, that hope and fear ought not at all to influence men in the matter of duty: which yet is most absurd: and since nothing that is absurd or false can, by genuine and just consequence, issue from what is true; it follows, that the former assertion or position, from which this latter is inferred, is most false and irrational. Which was the thing to be proved. And so

I proceed to answer such objections as may with any colour of argument be alleged in opposition to the doctrine hitherto laid down and defended by us, and so conclude this first proposition: as,

1. It may be argued, that there is a certain complacency and serenity of mind attending the performance of actions pious and virtuous, and a kind of horror or remorse that follows the neglect of them, or the doing of the quite contrary; the consideration of which alone, setting aside all further hopes of a future reward, may be a sufficient argument to enforce the practice of duty upon any sober, rational mind whatsoever.

To this I answer that this complacency of mind upon a man's

doing his duty on the one side, and that remorse attending his neglect of it, or doing the quite contrary, on the other, are so far from excluding a respect to a future recompence, or being a different motive from it, that they do really imply it, and are principally founded in it; the said complacency flowing naturally from the assurance given a man by his conscience, that the honesty and goodness of his actions sets him free and safe from all that evil and punishment which the law of God awards to the transgressors of it. And the contrary remorse of mind proceeding chiefly from a dread of those punishments, which a man's conscience assures him that the breach of the said law will render the breakers of it obnoxious to. And that this is so, is demonstrable by this one reason; that several men are differently affected, either with this complacency or remorse of mind, upon their doing the very same action; and that because some are verily persuaded that the said action is a sin, and so to be followed with the penal consequents of sin; and others, on the contrary, are as fully persuaded that it is no sin. For the better illustration and proof of which, we must observe, that men's judgments concerning sin have been, and in several parts of the world still are, very different; so that what is sin with one people or nation, is not always so with another: as for instance, some account drunkenness no sin, as many of the Germans; and others have had the same thoughts of theft, as the Spartans; and of fornication, as most of the heathens; and some again think that an officious lie is no sin, as the Jesuits and Socinians: whereas others, on the contrary, stand as fully persuaded that all these are sins (as indeed they are, and most of them very gross ones too), and such as, unrepented of, will assuredly consign over the persons guilty of them to eternal punishment from the hands of a sin-revenging justice.

But now, upon these two so different, preconceived opinions, it will and must certainly follow, that those of the latter judgment cannot but feel that horror and remorse of mind upon the doing of these actions, which those of the contrary persuasion, to wit, that they are no sins, undoubtedly, upon the very same actions, do not feel. But now, from whence can this be? Surely, not from the bare action itself, nor from any thing naturally adherent to it; forasmuch as the action, with all that is natural to it, is the same in both those sorts of men, whose minds, after the doing of it, are so differently affected. And therefore it must needs be from the different infusions into, and prepossessions of men in their minority and first education; by which some have been taught, that a severe punishment and after reckoning belongs to such and such actions; and by which others again have been taught that they are actions in themselves indifferent, and to which no penalty at all is due.

I conclude, therefore, that the complacency which men find

upon the performance of their duty, and the remorse which they feel upon the neglect of it, taken abstractedly from all consideration of a future reward, cannot be a sufficient motive to duty; because, indeed, so taken, they are but a mere fiction or chimera. For that all such complacency and remorse are founded only upon an early persuasion wrought into men's minds of a following retribution of happiness or misery allotted to men hereafter, according to the different nature and quality of their actions here: and so much in answer to this first exception. But,

2. Some again object and argue, that there is a different spirit required under the gospel, from that which was either under or before the Mosaic dispensation; and therefore, though it might be lawful and allowable enough for the church in those days, living under an inferior economy, in all acts of duty to have respect to the recompence of reward; yet in times of higher and more spiritual attainments, and under a gospel-state, men ought wholly to act and to be acted by such a filial and free spirit, as never to enter upon any duty with the least regard to an after compensation; this being servile, legal, and mercenary; as these sons of perfection do pretend.

But to this also I answer, that the Jewish church, and the church before it, may be considered under a double character or capacity: 1. As they sustained the peculiar formality of a church so or so constituted. And, 2. As they were men, or rational creatures, as the rest of mankind are.

Now it must be confessed, that what belonged to them in the former capacity was undoubtedly proper and peculiar to them, and so neither does nor ought to conclude the church now-a-days, being cast into a different form or constitution. Nevertheless, what belonged to them simply as they were men, or moral agents, equally belongs to and concerns the church in all places and all ages of the world, and under all forms, models, and administrations whatsoever.

But now, for any one in the works of duty to proceed upon hopes of a reward, is (as I have already shown) the result of a rational nature, endued with such faculties of mind as, according to their natural way of acting, especially as the state of nature now is, will hardly or never be brought to apply heartily to duty, but in the strength of such motives; the very nature of man inclining him chiefly, if not solely, to act upon such terms and conditions; so that to do one's duty with regard to a following recompence, concerns not men under any peculiar denomination of Jews or Christians, but simply as they are men. And to affirm the contrary, is a direct passing over to the heresy and dotage of the Sadducees, who by mistaking and perverting that saying of Zaddock, the author of their sect and name, to wit, That men ought to do virtuously without any thought of a following recompence, carried it to that irreligion, as to deny all

rewards of happiness or misery in another world ; and consequently, a resurrection to another life after this. Such horrid and profane inferences were drawn, or rather dragged by these heretics from one unwary and misunderstood expression.

Nevertheless, so much is and must be granted (and no doubt Zadock himself, if there were such a one, never intended more), that for a man in the practice of duty to act solely and entirely from a desire of a following recompence, exclusively to all love of the work and duty itself, is indeed servile and mercenary, and no ways suitable to that filial temper which ought to govern all Christian minds. But then again, we must remember, that to do one's duty only for a reward, and not to be willing to do it without one, are very different things. And if we consider even Judas himself, it was not his carrying the bag while he followed his Master, but his following his Master only that he might carry the bag, which made him a thief and a hireling. For otherwise, I cannot see why he might not have been every whit as lawfully his Master's almoner, as he was one of his apostles ; and have carried his bag with the same duty with which he might have carried his cross.

But now, if we shall drive the matter so far as to make it absolutely unchristian for a man, in the practice of duty, to have any design at all upon a future reward, why then (as I may speak with reverence) does not God, in the conversion of a sinner, new-model his very essence, cashier and lop off the natural affections of hope and fear ? And why does he also promise us heaven and glory, if it be not lawful for us to pursue what he is pleased to promise ? For are these promises made to quicken our endeavours, or to debase and spoil our performances ? To be helps, or rather snares to our obedience ? All which, if it be both absurd and impious for any one to imagine, then it will follow that this and the like exceptions, from which such paradoxes are inferred, must needs also fall to the ground as false and not to be defended.

But before I make an end of this first proposition, it may not be amiss to consider a little the temper of those seraphic pretenders to religion, who have presumed to refine upon it by such airy, impracticable notions, and have made such a mighty noise with their gospel spirits and gospel dispensations, their high attainments and wonderful illuminations, screwing up matters to such a height, that there is no hope of being a Christian without being something more than a man. For so, I am sure, ought he to be, who in the doing of his duty, must not be suffered to expect or look for any reward after it ; nor, in his way to heaven, so much as to think of the place which he is going to. I say, if we consider the temper of these highfliers (who would needs impose such a new Christianity upon the world), are they themselves all spirit and life, all Christianity sublimated (as I may so express it) ? Are they nothing but self-denial and divine love ?

nothing but a pure ascending flame, without any mixture or communication with these lower elements? I must confess I could never yet find any such thing in this sort of men; but on the contrary, have generally observed them to be as arrant worldlings, and as proud and selfish a generation of men, as ever disgraced the name of Christianity by wearing it; and far from giving any other proof, that in all their religious performances they never act with an eye to a future reward, but only this one, that having wholly fastened their eyes, their hands, and their hearts also, upon this world, they cannot possibly, at the same time, place them upon another too. On the other side, therefore, not to aspire to such heights and elevations in religion (or rather indeed above it), since God, of his abundant goodness, has been pleased to invite and even court us to our duty with such liberal and glorious rewards, let us neither despise his grace, nor be wiser than his methods; but with arms as open to take, as his are to give, let us embrace the motives he has afforded us, as so many springs and wheels to our obedience. And whosoever shall piously, constantly, and faithfully do his duty with hopes of the promised recompence, shall find that God will not fail to make good that promise to him hereafter, by an humble dependence upon which he was brought to do his duty here: and so much for our first and main proposition. The

II. Which, as I showed before, was in a manner included in the first, and so scarce needs any prosecution distinct from it, is this: *that the proposal of a reward on God's part, and a respect had to it on man's, are undoubtedly necessary to engage men in a course of duty and obedience.*

For the discussion of which, I shall briefly do these two things:

1. I shall show in what respect they are said to be necessary.
2. I shall show why, and upon what reasons, they ought to be accounted so.

1. And first for the necessity of them. A thing may be said to be necessary two ways. As,

(1.) When by the very essence or nature of it, it is such, that it implies in it a contradiction, and consequently an impossibility, even by the power of God himself, that (the said nature continuing) it should be otherwise. And thus, I shall never presume to affirm (though some I know do) that God cannot induce a man (being a free agent) to a course of duty and obedience, without proposing a competent reward to such obedience. For I question not but God can so qualify and determine the will of a rational agent, and that without the least diminution to its natural freedom, that the inclination and bias of it shall wholly propend to good, and that from a mere love of goodness itself, without any consideration of a further recompence. And the reason of this is, because all good, as such, is in its de-

gree a proper object for the will to choose; and whatsoever is a proper object of its choice, is also sufficient to draw forth and determine the actings of it, unless there interpose some stronger *appetibile*, to rival or overmatch it in its choice: and yet even in this case also, God, no doubt, can so strengthen the propensity of the will to good, that it shall have no appetite to, or relish for the pleasures of sense at all; and consequently shall need no proposal, either of reward or punishment, to draw it off from the choice and pursuit of those things which the grace of God has already given it such an entire aversion to. For this, questionless, is the present condition of the angels and other glorified spirits, whose will is so absolutely determined to good, as to be without any proneness or disposition at all to evil; and what condition they are in at present, God, we may be sure, by his omnipotence, could have created man in at first, and have preserved him in ever since, had he been so pleased; so that there is nothing in the thing itself impossible. But this, I own, affects not immediately the case now before us. And therefore in the

(2.) Place: a thing may be said to be necessary, not absolutely, but with respect to that particular state and condition in which it is. And thus, because God has actually so cast the present condition of man as to make his inclination to good but imperfect, and during this life to continue it so, and withal to place him among such objects as are mightily apt to draw him off from what is morally good, it was necessary (upon the supposal of such a condition) that, if God would have men effectually choose good and avoid evil, he should suggest to them some further motives to good, and arguments against evil, than what the bare consideration of the things themselves prohibited or commanded by him can afford. For otherwise, that which was morally good, meeting with so faint and feeble an inclination in the will towards it, will never be able to make any prevailing impression upon that leading faculty. From all which you see, in what sense we affirm it necessary for God to propose rewards to men, thereby to engage them to their duty; namely, because of that imperfect estate which God has been pleased to leave men under in this world.

2. And now, in the next place, for the proof of this necessity (which was the other thing proposed by us), these two general reasons may be offered.

(1.) The first taken from clear evidence of scripture. And the

(2.) From the constant avowed practice of all the wise lawgivers of the world.

(1.) And first for scripture. It has been more than sufficiently proved from thence already, how deplorably unable the heart of man is, not only to conquer, but even to contend with the difficulties of a spiritual course, without a steady view of such promises as may supply new life, spirit, and vigour to its

obedience. To all which, let it suffice at present to add that full and notable declaration of St. Paul, in 1 Cor. xv. 19, that "if in this life only we had hope in Christ, we were of all men most miserable." And certainly, for a man to know, that by being a Christian he should be "of all men most miserable," was as untoward an argument (should we look no further) to persuade him to be a Christian, as could well have been thought of. So that we see here how those *adepti*, those men of perfection before spoken of, who scorn to be religious out of any respect to a future reward, are already got a pitch above the third heaven, and far beyond the utmost perfection that St. Paul himself ever pretended to. But

(2.) The other proof of the same assertion shall be taken from the practice of all the noted lawgivers of the world; who have still found it necessary to back and fortify their laws with rewards and punishments; these being the very strength and sinew of the law, as the law itself is of government.

No wise ruler ever yet ventured the peace of society upon the goodness of men's nature, or the virtuous inclination of their temper. Nor was any thing truly great and extraordinary ever almost achieved, but in the strength of some reward every whit as great and extraordinary as the action which it carried a man out to. Thus it was in the virtue of Saul's high promises that David encountered Goliath: the giant indeed was the mark he shot or rather slung at; but the king's daughter and the court preferments were the mark he most probably aimed at. For we read how inquisitive he was, what should be done for him. And it is not unknown how in the case of a scrupulous oath-sick conscience also, promise of preferment has been found the ablest casuist to resolve it; from which and the like passages, both ancient and modern, if we look further into the politics of the Greeks and the Romans, and other nations of remark in history, we shall find, that whensoever the laws enjoined any thing harsh, and to the doing of which men were naturally averse, they always thought it requisite to add allurements to obligation, by declaring a noble recompence (possibly some large pension, or gainful office, or title of honour) to the meritorious doers of whatsoever should be commanded them; and when again, on the other side, the law forbade the doing of any thing which men were otherwise mightily inclined to do, they were still forced to call in aid from the rods and the axes, and other terrible inflictions, to secure the authority of the prohibition against the bent and fury of the contrary inclination. And this course, being founded in the very nature of men and things, was and is as necessary to give force and efficacy to the divine laws themselves, as to any human laws whatsoever. For in vain do we think to find any man virtuous enough to be a law to himself, or any law strong enough to enforce and drive home its own obli-

gation; or lastly, the prerogative of any lawgiver high enough to assure to him the subject's obedience. For men generally affect to be caressed and encouraged, and, as it were, bought to their duty (as well as from it too sometimes). For which and the like causes, when God, by Moses, had set before his own people a large number of the most excellent, and, as one would think, self-recommending precepts on the one hand, and a black roll of the very worst and vilest of sins on the other, sins that seemed to carry their punishment in their very commission; yet nevertheless in the issue God found it needful to bring up the rear of all with those decretory words, in Deut. xxx. 19, "Behold, I have this day set before you life and death, blessing and cursing." And what he then set before the Israelites he now sets before us and the whole world besides; and when we shall have well weighed the nature of the things set before us, and considered what life is, and what death is, I suppose we shall need neither instruction nor exhortation, to which of the two we should direct our choice.

And now, to close up all, and to relieve your patience, you have heard the point stated and argued, and the objections against it answered; after all which, what can we so naturally infer from this whole discourse, as the infinite concern, lying upon every man, to fix to himself such a principle to act by, as may effectually bring him to that great and beatific end, which he came into the world for?

This is most certain, that no man's practice can rise higher than his hopes. It is to be observed in aqueducts, that no pipe or conduit can force the current of the water higher than the spring-head itself lies, from whence the water first descends. In like manner, it is impossible for a man, who designs to himself only the rewards of this world, to act in the strength thereof, at such a rate as shall bring him to a better. And the reason of this is, because whosoever makes these present enjoyments his whole design, accounts them absolutely the best things he can have, and accordingly he looks no further, he expects no better; and if so, it is not to be imagined that he should ever obtain what he never so much as looked for: for no man shall come to heaven by chance.

As for trials and temptations, those fatal rocks which the souls of men are so apt to dash upon, we may take this for an infallible rule concerning them, namely, that nothing in this world can support a man against such trials, as shall threaten him with the utter loss of this world. For the truth is, it would imply a contradiction to suppose that it could; and yet these are the trials which even wise men so much fear and prepare for, and know that they shall sink under and perish by, unless borne up by something mightier and greater than the world. and therefore not to be found in it.

What further trials God may have in reserve for us we cannot tell; only this we may reckon upon as a certain though sad truth, that there has been a mighty growing guilt upon this nation for several years. And as great guilts naturally portend as well as provoke great judgments, so God knows how soon the black cloud, which has been so long gathering over us, may break and pour down upon us; and how near we may be to times in which he who will keep his conscience must expect to keep nothing else.

For nothing, certainly, can cast a more dreadful aspect upon us, than those monstrous crying immoralities lately broke in amongst us, by which, not only the English virtue, but the very English temper, seems utterly to have left us; while, to the terror of all pious minds, foreign vices have invaded us, which threaten us more than any foreign armies can.

As for our excellent church, which has been so maligned and struck at on all hands, and we of this place especially; and that by some whom we had little cause to expect such stabs from (to their just and eternal infamy be it spoken*): we have been moreover told, and that with spite and insolence enough, that our possessions and privileges are very precarious (though yet, thanks be to God and to our ancient government, confirmed to us by all that this nation calls law); and withal, that our reign will be very short, as no doubt, if republicans might have their will, the reign of all kings, even of king William himself, would be so too. But still, blessed be the Almighty, we are in his hands; and whatsoever his most wise Providence may bring upon us, we know upon what terms our great Lord and Master will deal with us; having so fully declared himself, as to all these critical turns and trials of our obedience, in Rev. ii. 10, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." God enable us to be the former, by a steady, unshaken hope of the latter.

To which God be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

* See a virulent, insulting pamphlet, entitled, *A Letter to a Member of Parliament*, &c. p. 14 and 52, printed in the year 1697, and as like the author himself, W. W., as malice can make it.

SERMON X.

ON THE GENERAL RESURRECTION.

ACTS XXIV. 15.

Having hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

THE most wise Creator of the universe has so formed one world, that it is not to be governed without the help of another; nor the actions of the life here, to be kept in order without the hopes and fears of one hereafter. The truth is, next to God himself, hopes and fears govern all things. They act by a kind of royal deputation under him, and are so without control, that they carry all before them, by an absolute, unlimited sway. For so long as God governs the world (which will be as long as there is a world to govern), law must govern under him, and the sanction of rewards and punishments must be that which enables the law itself to govern: human nature of itself being by no means so well disposed, as to make its duty the sole motive or measure of its obedience.

For as in other cases, so here, it is not so much the hand which binds, as the bond or chain with which it binds, which must make good its hold upon the thing or person so bound by it. Every man, in all that concerns him, stands influenced by his hopes and fears, and those by rewards and punishments, the proper and respective objects thereof; and the divine law is the grand adamantine ligament, tying both of them fast together; by assuring rewards to our hopes, and punishments to our fears; so that man being thus bound by the peremptory, irreversible decree of heaven, must by virtue thereof, indispensably obey or suffer; the sentence of the law being universal and perpetual, either of a work to be done, or a penalty to be endured.

But whether it be from the nature or fate of mankind, it is no small matter of wonder, that man, of all creatures, should have such an averseness to obey, and such a proneness to disobey his Maker, that nothing under an eternity of happiness or misery (the first of them unspeakable, and the other of them intolerable) should be the means appointed to engage him to the one, or deter him from the other. And it is yet a greater wonder, that not only such a method of dealing with men should be thought necessary, but that in such innumerable instances it should be found not sufficient; at least not

effectual to the end it is intended for; as the event of things too fatally demonstrates it not to be.

Nevertheless, since almighty God has pitched upon this method of governing the world by rewards and punishments, a resurrection of the persons so to be rewarded or punished must needs be granted absolutely and unavoidably necessary: nothing in this life giving us a satisfactory account, that either the good or the bad have been yet dealt with according to the strict and utmost merit of their works; which yet the justice of an infinitely wise judge and governor having so positively declared his will in the case, cannot but insist upon. For albeit God, as Creator of the world, acted therein by an absolute, sovereign power, always under the conduct of infinite wisdom and goodness; yet, as governor of it, his justice is the prime attribute which he proceeds by, and the laws the grand instruments whereby justice acts, as rewards and punishments are the things which give life, force, and efficacy to justice itself. Upon which grounds the apostle gives us a full account of the whole matter, in that excellent place in 2 Cor. v. 10, "We must all," says he, "appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Thus says the apostle. But the dead, we know, as such, can receive no such things; nor are subjects capable of rewards or punishments: so that the sum of the apostle's whole argument amounts to this: that as certainly as God governs the world wisely, and will one day judge it righteously, so certain is it that there must be a general retribution, and, by consequence, a general resurrection.

In my discourse upon which, I shall cast the whole prosecution of the subject here to be treated of by us under these three propositions, viz.

I. That a belief of a resurrection from the dead is a thing exceeding difficult, strange, and harsh to the discourses of natural reason.

II. That notwithstanding this great difficulty, there is yet sufficient reason and solid ground for the belief of it. And,

III. And lastly, That supposing a sufficiency of reason for this belief, all difficulties and seeming repugnancies alleageable against it, do exceedingly advance the worth, value, and excellency of it.

Now under these three propositions shall be taken in all that we shall or can say concerning the general resurrection at the last day. And accordingly, as to the first of the three propositions, importing the great difficulty, strangeness, and repugnancy of the article of the resurrection to the belief of natural reason, we find, moreover, in the text here pitched upon by us, that the main objection insisted upon by the principal of St. Paul's

opposers, the Sadducees, against the doctrine preached by him, was drawn from this controverted point of the resurrection, and of the incredibility of the same, founded upon the supposed impossibility thereof; which, as it was a point of incomparably the greatest moment in the practice of religion, and consequently with the firmest steadiness to be assented to, and with equal zeal to be contended for by our apostle; so was it with no less heat and fierceness opposed and exploded by those his forementioned antagonists. In treating of which I shall endeavour these two things:

1. To show that there is such an extraordinary averseness in natural reason to the belief of a resurrection, as in the said proposition we have affirmed that there is.

2. To assign the causes from which this averseness proceeds. And,

1. For the first of these. The surest and readiest way, I should think, to learn the verdict of reason in this matter, would be to proceed by the rule and standard of their judgment, who were the most acknowledged and renowned masters of reason and learning in the several ages of the world, the philosophers; persons who discoursed upon the bare principles of natural reason, and upon no higher; who pretended not to revelation, but acquiesced in such discoveries as nature, assisted with industry and improved with hard study, could furnish them with. And this certainly was the best and likeliest way to state the *ne plus ultra* of reason, and to show how far it could and could not go, by showing how far it had actually gone already. And the world has had experience in more sorts of learning than one, how much those who have gone before have surpassed in perfection, as well as time, those who have come after them.

Now, in the first rank of these great and celebrated persons, Pythagoras (the earliest whom history reports to us to have been dignified with the title of philosopher) asserted and taught a metempsychosis, or transmigration of the same soul into several bodies; which is utterly inconsistent with a resurrection; the number of bodies, upon these terms, in so great a proportion exceeding the number of souls: one soul wearing out many bodies, as one body does many garments. So that the Pythagoric principle can admit of no resurrection, unless there could be as many souls as bodies to rejoin one another; which, upon this hypothesis, cannot be.

Plato indeed speaks much of the immortality of the soul: but by not so much as mentioning the rising of the body again after its dissolution (when yet he treated of so cognate a subject), we may rationally presume that he knew nothing of it; and that amongst all his ideas, as I may so express it, he had none of such a resurrection.

Aristotle held an eternity of the world, viz. as to the heavens

and the earth, the principal parts of it. But as to things mutable, he placed that eternity in the endless succession of individuals; which clearly shows, that he meant not that those individuals should revive and return to an endless duration. For since he asserted this succession only to immortalize the kind or species, the immortality of particulars would have rendered that succession wholly needless.

As for the Stoics and Epicureans, who, I am sure, were reputed the subtlest and most acute of all the sects of philosophers, we have them, in Acts xvii. 32, scoffing at the very mention of rising from the dead. They thought it ridiculous for animated dust once dead to revive, or for man to be made or raised out of it any more than once. For if that might be, they reckoned that men could not properly be said to die, but rather only to hold their breath for some time, than totally to lose it; and that death might be called a sleep without a metaphor, if we might so soon shake it off, and rise from it again. In short, if Zeno or Chrysippus were alive, they would explode, and if Epicurus himself should rise from the dead, he would scarce believe a resurrection.

But to pass from heathens to those who had their reason further improved by revelation, we have in the Jewish church a great, a learned, and considerable sect, called the Sadducees, wholly discarding this article from their creed; as St. Matthew tells us, in Matt. xxii. 23, and St. Luke, in Acts xxiii. 8, that "the Sadducees say there is no resurrection," &c., as, no doubt, it was their interest (as well as belief) that there should be none.

And lastly, even for some of those who professed Christianity itself, and that in the famous city of Corinth, where most of the gallantry, the wit, and learned arts of Greece flourished, we find some Christians themselves denying it, as appears from that elaborate confutation which St. Paul bestowed upon them, in 1 Corinthians xv.

Which instances, amongst several others assignable to the same purpose, may suffice to show, how hardly this article finds credit with those who are led by principles of mere natural reason; and indeed so strange and incredible does it appear to such (and some others also, though professing higher principles), that the same power which God exerted in raising Christ from the dead, seems necessary to raise such sons of infidelity to a firm and thorough belief of it. And so I come to the

Second thing proposed, viz. To assign the causes, why natural reason thus starts from the belief of a resurrection, and these may be reckoned of two sorts.

1. Such as are taken from the manifold improbabilities, rendering the matter so exceeding unlikely to the judgment of human reason, that it cannot frame itself to a belief that there is really any such thing. And,

2. Such as are drawn from the downright impossibility charged upon it. Both which are to be considered. And,

1. Those many great improbabilities and unlikelihoods alleged against the resurrection of the same numerical body, are apt to give a mighty check to the mind of man in yielding its belief to it. For who would imagine, or could conceive, that when a body, by continual fraction and dissipation, is crumbling into millions of little atoms, some portions of it rarified into air, others sublimated into fire, and the rest changed into earth and water, the elements should after all this surrender back their spoils, and the several parts, after such a dispersion, should travel from all the four quarters of the world to meet together, and come to a mutual interview of one another, in one and the same individual body again? That God should summon a part out of this fish, that fowl, that beast, that tree, and remand it to its former place, to unite into a new combination for the rebuilding of a fallen edifice, and restoring an old, broken, demolished carcass to itself once more? So that, by such a continual circulation of life and death following upon one another, the grave should become, not so much a conclusion, as the interruption; not the period, but the parenthesis of our lives; a short interval between the present and the future, and only a passage to convey us from one life to another. These things, we must confess, are both difficult in the notion, and hard to our belief. For though, indeed, the word of truth has declared that "all flesh is grass," and man but as the flower of the field; yet the apprehensions of sense will hardly be brought to acknowledge that he therefore grows upon his own grave, or springs afresh out of the ground. For can the jaws of death relent? or the grave (of all things) make restitution? Can filth and rottenness be the preparatives to glory, and dust and ashes the seed-plots of immortality? Is the sepulchre a place to dress ourselves in for heaven, the attiring room for corruption to put on incorruption, and to fit us for the beatific vision? These are paradoxes which nature cannot well digest; mysteries which it cannot fathom; being all of them such as the common universal observation of the world is wholly a stranger to.

And thus much for the first cause, which generally keeps men from a belief of the resurrection; namely, the great improbabilities and unlikelihoods attending it; but this is not all; there being yet another and a greater argument alleged against it, and that is in the

2. And next place, the downright impossibilities charged upon it. And this from the seemingly unanswerable contradictions and absurdities implied in it, and, as some think, unavoidably consequent upon it. Of which the chief, and most hardly reconcilable to the discourses of human reason, is founded in and derivable from the continual transmutation of one thing into another. For how extravagant soever the forementioned Pytha-

gorean hypothesis of the transmigration, or metempsychosis of one soul into several bodies, may be justly accounted to be; yet the transmutation of one body into another ought not to be accounted so. For the parts of a body, we know, are in a continual flux, and the decays of nature are repaired by the daily substitution of new matter derived from our nutriment; and when, at length, this body comes to be dissolved by death, it soon after returns to earth; and that earth is animated into grass, and that grass turned into the substance of the beast which eats it, and that beast becomes food to man, and so, by a long percolation, is converted into his flesh and substance. So that such matter or substance, which was once an integral part of this man's body, perhaps twenty years after his death, by this round or circle of perpetual transmutation, comes to be an integral part of another man's. Now, if there be a resurrection, and every man shall be restored with his own numerical body, perfect and complete, we may propose our doubt in those words of the Sadducees to our Saviour, in Matt. xxii. 28, concerning the woman who had been married to several husbands successively: "To which of them shall she belong at the last day? for all of them had her." So may it be said of such a portion of matter or substance, which by continual change has been an integral part of several bodies, to which of these bodies shall it be restored at the resurrection? For having successively belonged to each of them, either our bodies must not rise entire, or the same portion of substance and matter must be a part of several distinct bodies, and consequently be in several distinct places at the same time, which is manifestly impossible.

Now the foundation of this argument, taken from the vicissitude and mutual change of things into one another, is clear from obvious and universally uncontested experience; and being so, the restitution of every soul to its own respective body, and to every integral part of it, is a thing to which all principles of natural reason seem a contradiction; and by consequence, if so, not within the power of Omnipotence to effect. I say, it seems so; and I will not presume to say more.

The consideration of which drove the Socinians, those known enemies to natural as well as revealed religion (whatsoever they pretend in contradiction to what they assert in behalf of both), together with some others, peremptorily to deny that men shall be raised with the same numerical bodies which they had in this world, but with another, which for its ethereal, refined substance, they say, is, by St. Paul, termed a spiritual body, 1 Cor. xv. 44. And being here pressed with the very literal signification of the word resurrection, which implies a repeated existence of the same thing, they will have it here used only by a kind of metaphor, viz. That because in death a man seems to the perception and view of sense utterly to perish and cease to be, therefore his

restitution seems to have a sort of resurrection. And as for those Greek words *ἀναστῆναι* and *ἐγείρειν*, they endeavour to show, by other like places of scripture, that they signify no more than the bare suscitation, raising, or giving being to a thing, without its having fallen or perished before. As for instance, in Matt. xxii. 24, *Ἀναστήσει τὸ σπέρμα τῷ ἀδελφῷ*, "He shall raise up seed to his brother." And in Rom. ix. 17, God says of Pharaoh, *Διὰ τοῦτο ἐξήγγειρά σε*. "For this cause have I raised thee up." Whereas, neither of these can be supposed to have perished before that raising. From whence, and some other such like places, they conclude that these words, applied to the present case, import at most, the bare restoration of the man; and that not necessarily by restoring his soul to its old body, but by joining it to a new; accounted indeed the same to all real intents and purposes of use, though not by formal identity; they still affirming, nevertheless, the man thus raised, and with his new body, to be the same person; forasmuch, as they say, it is the soul or spirit which makes the man, and is the proper principle which gives the individuation. This was their opinion.

And thus I have done with the first of the three propositions drawn from the words, viz. The exceeding great difficulty of men's believing a resurrection. And that both by proving that actually it is so, from the most authentic examples alleageable in the case, and by assigning withal the reasons and causes why it comes to be so; I proceed now to the

II. Proposition, viz. To show, *that notwithstanding this difficulty, there is yet sufficient reason and solid ground for the belief of it.*

And this I shall endeavour to do, both by answering the foregoing objections brought against the resurrection, and withal offering something, by way of argument, for the positive proof of it.

1. Now for the first of these. I show that the resurrection was argued against upon two distinct heads, viz. The improbabilities attending it, and the impossibilities charged upon it. And

(1.) Briefly, as to the objection from the improbabilities said to attend it, and to keep men off from the belief of it, besides that the said objection runs in a very loose and popular, rather than in a close and argumentative way, and looks more like harangue than reasoning (though yet the best that the thing will bear), we are to observe yet further, that not every strange and unusual event ought always, and under all circumstances, to be accounted improbable. For where a sufficient cause of any thing or event may be assigned, though above and beyond the common course of natural causes, I cannot reckon that event or thing properly and strictly improbable. Forasmuch as it is no ways improbable that the supreme agent and governor of things should, for some

great end or purpose, sometimes step out of the ordinary road of his providence (as undoubtedly he often does), and of which there are several instances upon record, both in sacred and profane story, relating what strange things have happened in the world, which could not rationally be ascribed to any other, but the supernatural workings of a divine power. Nevertheless, admitting, but not granting, the fore-alleged improbabilities of a resurrection; yet this does not at all affect the point now in dispute before us, which turns not properly upon the probability, but the possibility of the thing here discoursed of. And where there is a possibility on the one side, answered by an omnipotence on the other, there can be no ground to question an effect commensurate to both. For a resurrection being allowed possible, though never so improbable, still it is in the number of those things which an infinite power can do; and upon this account we find, that there is a much higher pitch of infidelity, which stops not here, but goes so far on as to deny the very possibility of it too: and this brings me to the examination of the

(2.) Objection produced against this article of the resurrection, from the utter impossibility thereof, as the objectors pretend; and that impossibility, as we have shown, founded upon the continual transmutation of one body into another. This, I say, was the argument; and it seems to me to press the hardest upon the resurrection of the same numerical body, and to be the most difficult to be solved and answered of any other whatsoever. For as for those commonly drawn from the seeming impossibility of bringing together such an innumerable multitude of minute particles, as from a body once dissolved must needs be scattered all the world over into the several elements of fire, air, water, and earth, and re-uniting them all together at the last day; I cannot, I say, find any thing in all this either hard or puzzling, and much less contrary to natural reason to believe, if we do but acknowledge an omniscience in the agent who is to do this great thing, joined with an omnipotence in the same. For, by the first of these two perfections, he cannot but know where all and every one of the said particles of the body are lodged and disposed of; and by the latter, he must be no less able to bring them from all parts and places of the universe, though never so vastly distant from one another, and join them again together in the restitution of the said body. Nothing being difficult, either for omniscience to know, or for omnipotence to do; but when the thing to be done is, in the nature of it, impossible; as the fore-alleged argument would infer the resurrection to be.

To which therefore I answer, that the proposition or assertion, upon which the said argument is grounded, is neither evident nor certain; and that we have no assurance that the transmutation of a human body into other animated bodies after its dissolution, is total, and extends to all the parts thereof; but that

there may be a considerable portion of matter in every man's body (for of such only we now dispute), which never passes by transmutation into any other animated body, but sinks into and rests in the common mass of matter, contained in the four elements, according to the respective nature of each particular element wherein it is lodged, and there continues unchanged by any new animation till the last day. But what these particular parts are, which admit of no such further change, and what quantity of corporeal substance or matter they make or amount to, I suppose, is known only to God himself, the great disposer and governor, as well as maker and governor of the world.

And whereas it is said in the objection, that such a continual transmutation as is here supposed, is evident from a general, constant, uncontestable experience; I deny, that the just measures, bounds, and compass of this transmutation can be exactly known by, or evident to common experience; forasmuch as it falls not under the cognizance of the outward senses; and yet it is only that, and the repeated observations made thereby, which experience is or can be founded upon. For who can assure himself, or any one else upon his own personal sight, hearing, or the report of any other of his senses, that the whole matter of a dissolved body passes successively into other living bodies? (though a great portion of it may, and without question does;) and if, on the other side, he cannot, upon his own personal observation, give a full and exact account of this, can he pretend to tell how and where the providence of God has disposed of the remaining part of the said dissolved body, which has not undergone any such change? This, I say, is not to be known by us, either by any observation of sense or discourse of reason founded thereupon, and I know of no revelation to adjust the matter. So that, although it should be supposed true (which we do by no means grant to be so) that in the dissolution of every human body, the whole mass and every part of the said body underwent such an entire transmutation as we have been speaking of; yet since this cannot certainly be known, it cannot come into argumentation, as a proof of that which it is alleged for; unless we would prove an *ignotum per æquè ignotum*; which being grossly illogical, and a mere *petitio principii*, can conclude nothing, nor at all affect the subject in dispute, one way or other; forasmuch as in every demonstration of the highest sort, the principles thereof ought to be evident as well as certain.

The sum of all therefore is this; that every human body, upon its dissolution, sinks by degrees into the elementary mass of matter; whereof a great part passes by several animations into other bodies; and a great part likewise remains in the same elementary mass, without undergoing any further change. To which reserved portion, at the last day, the soul, as the prime, individuating principle, and the said reserved portion of matter, as an

essential and radical part of the individuation, together with a sufficient supply of matter (if requisite) from the general mass, shall, by the almighty power of God joining all those together, make up and restore the same individual person : and this cuts off all necessity of holding, that what was once an integral part of one body, should, at the same time, become an integral part of another, which, it is confessed, for the reason before given, would make the restitution of the same numerical portion of matter to both bodies utterly impossible.

But if it be here replied, that our assertion of a reserved portion of matter never passing into other animated bodies by any further transmutation (albeit a considerable portion of the same dissolved body be allowed so to do) is a thing merely *gratis dictum* ; and that we have not yet positively proved the same : my answer is, that in the present case, there is no necessity of proving that it is actually so ; but it is sufficient to our purpose, that the contrary cannot be proved, and that nothing hinders but that it may be so ; the thing being in itself possible : and if that be granted, then the argument, founded upon the supposed impossibility of it, comes to nothing. Forasmuch as being possible, it falls within the compass of God's omnipotence, which is the great attribute to be employed in this case. And this effectually overthrows the whole force of the objection.

But if it be further argued, that the great addition of matter to be made at the last day out of the common mass, to those remainders of matter, which (having belonged to the same man's body formerly) are then to be completed into a perfect body again, seems inconsistent with the numerical identity of the body which was before, and that which shall be afterwards at the resurrection : I answer, that this is no more inconsistent with the numerical identity thereof, than the addition of so great a quantity of new matter, as comes to be made to a man's body by a continual augmentation of all the parts of it, from his birth to his full stature, makes his body numerically another at his grown age, from that which the same person had while he was yet an infant. In both which ages, nevertheless, the body is still reckoned but one and the same in number, though, in disparity of bulk and substance, twenty to one greater in the latter than in the former. Accordingly, suppose we further, that only so much matter as has still continued in our bodies, from our coming into the world to our going out of it, shall be reunited to our soul at the resurrection, even that may and will be sufficient to constitute our glorified body in a real, numerical identity with that body which the soul was in before, so as, upon all accounts, to be still the same body, though in those so very different states and conditions.

And therefore, the opinion of the Socinians, viz., That the soul, at the resurrection, shall be clothed with another and quite different body from what it had in this life (whether of ether, or

some such like sublimated matter), moved thereto by the fore-mentioned objections, and the like, ought not to be admitted: it being contrary to reason and all sound philosophy, that the soul, successively united to two entirely distinct bodies, should make but one and the same numerical person; since though the soul be indeed the prime and chief principle of the individuation of the person, yet it is not the sole and adequate principle thereof; but the soul, joined with the body, makes the adequate, individuating principle of the person. Nor will any true philosophy allow that the body was ever intended for the mere garment of the soul, but for an essential, constituent part of the man, as really as the soul itself: and the 'difference of an essential half in any composition, will be sure to make an essential difference in the whole compound. Nor is the Socinian assertion more contrary to the principles of philosophy than to the express words of scripture;* which are not more positive in affirming a resurrection, than in declaring a resurrection of the same numerical person. And whereas they say, that they grant that the same numerical person shall rise again, though not the same body (the soul, as they contend, still individuating any body which it shall be clothed with), we have already shown, on the contrary, that the person cannot be numerically the same when the body is not so too; since the soul is not the sole principle of personal individuation, though the chief; besides that it seems very odd, and noways agreeable to the common sentiments of reason, to say that any thing rises again which had never perished nor fallen before, as it is certain that the body, which these men suppose shall be united to the soul at the last day, never did. But to elude the force of this argument, the Socinians pretend, that the words whereby we would infer a resurrection of the same body, to wit, ἀναστῆναι, ἐγείρειν, and ἐγείρεσθαι, &c., infer no such thing in the several texts from whence they are alleged; but only import a bare suscitation, or raising up of a thing, without any necessity of supposing it to have perished before, as being often applied to things entirely produced *de novo*. But the answer to this is not difficult, viz., That the point now before us is not wholly determinable from the bare grammatical use of these words; according to which we deny not, but that they sometimes import a mere suscitation or production of a thing, without supposing any precedent destruction of the same: but the sense of these words must be sometimes also determined by the particular state and circumstance of the objects to which they are applied; as when they are applied to and used about things bereaved of their former existence (as persons dead, and departed this life, manifestly are); and in such a case, whensoever, the words ἀναστῆναι, ἐγείρειν, and ἐγείρεσθαι, come to be so applied, I affirm that they can, with no tolerable accord to common sense and reason, be allowed to signify any thing else but

the repetition or restitution of lost existence, or, in other words, the resuscitation of that which had perished before.

And thus much in answer to the objection brought to prove the impossibility of a resurrection of the same numerical body founded upon the continual transmutation of one body into another. The sum of all amounting to this, viz., that if the transmutation of human bodies after death, into other animate bodies successively, be total, the objection founded upon such a transmutation is not easy to be avoided: and if, on the other side, it be not total, I cannot see how it proves that the restitution of the same numerical body carries in it any contradiction, nor, consequently, any impossibility at all. For the point now before us depending chiefly upon the due stating of the object of an infinite power; if the thing in dispute be but possible, it is sufficient to overthrow any argument that would pretend to prove that an omnipotence cannot effect it. Which consideration having been thus offered by us, for the clearing of the forecited objection, we shall now proceed in the

2. Place, to produce something, as we promised, by way of positive proof for the evincing of a resurrection, notwithstanding all the difficulties and repugnancies which seem to attend it. And here, since this is a point of religion knowable only by revelation, it cannot be positively proved or made out to us any other way than by revelation, that is to say, by what God has declared in his written word concerning it. For natural reason and philosophy will afford us but little assistance in a case so extremely above both. Accordingly, since revelation is our only competent guide in this matter, the natural method, I conceive, for us to proceed by in our discourses thereupon, must be this, viz., that whereas the objection is, that the resurrection of the same numerical body implies in it a contradiction, and therefore cannot possibly be, even by the divine power itself; the proper answer to this ought to be by an inversion of the same terms after this manner, viz., that God has declared that he will, and therefore can, raise the same numerical body at the last day. So that the sum of the whole matter turns upon this point; to wit, whether that which we judge to be or not to be a contradiction, ought to measure the extent of the divine power; or, on the other side, the divine power to determine what is or is not to be accounted by us a contradiction. And the difficulty on either side seems not inconsiderable. For if we take the first of these methods, this inconveniency will attend it; that the measure we make use of is always short of the thing we apply it to; as a finite must needs be short of an infinite: and sometimes also false, and thereby not only short of it, but moreover disagreeable to it; it being very possible (because indeed very frequent), that the mind of man, even with its utmost sagacity, may be mistaken, and judge that to imply a contradiction which really does not so. But, on the other hand, if we make the divine power the measure

whereby we ought to judge what is or what is not a contradiction, we make that a measure which we do not thoroughly understand or comprehend; and that is contrary to the very nature and notion of a measure; forasmuch as that by which we would understand another thing, ought to be first understood itself. But how shall we be able to understand the extent of an infinite power, so as to know certainly how far it can go, and where it must stop, and can go no further? As if we should argue thus: This or that implies in it no contradiction, because God, by his divine power, can effect it; I think the inference very good. But for all that, it may be replied, How do you know what an infinite or divine power can or cannot do? Certain it is, that it cannot destroy itself, or put an end to its own being; and possibly there may be some other things, unknown to us, which are likewise under an incapacity of being done by it. And how then shall we govern our speculations in this arduous and perplexing point? For my own part, I should think it not only the safest, but in all respects the most rational way, in any doubtful case, where the power of almighty God is concerned, to ascribe as much to him as his divine nature and attributes suffer us to do: that is to say, that we rather prescribe to our reason from his power, than to his power from any rule or maxim taken up by our reason. And since there is a necessity of some rule or other to proceed by, in forming a judgment of God's power, no less than of his other perfections; let God's word or revelation, in the name of all that pretends to be sensible or rational, founded upon his infallible knowledge of whatsoever he says or reveals, (and confirmed by his essential veracity inseparably attending it,) be that great rule for us to judge by: for a better, I am sure, can never be assigned, nor a safer relied upon. And accordingly, when our Saviour was to answer the Sadducees, disputing upon this very subject, the resurrection, he argues not from any topic of common reason, or natural philosophy, but wholly from the power of God, as declared by the word of God. "Do ye not therefore err," says he, Mark xii. 24, "because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?" or, in other words, the power of God, as declared in scripture? Our Saviour went no further with them, as knowing this to have been home to the point, and sufficient for their conviction. And upon the same account, those remarkable passages in the evangelists cannot but be of mighty weight in the present case; as that particularly in Matt. xix. 26, and in Mark x. 27. In both which it is plainly and positively affirmed, that "with God all things are possible;" and yet more particularly in Luke xviii. 27, where Christ, speaking of some things accounted with men impossible, tells us, that "the things impossible with men were possible with God." The antithesis, we see here, is clear and full enough; and yet even with men nothing uses to be accounted impossible, but what is judged by them one

way or other to imply in it a contradiction; and if so, it is evident, that the divine power may extend to some things, which, in the judgments of men, pass for contradictions; and consequently, that what according to their judgments implies in it a contradiction, cannot be always a just measure of what is impossible for God to do. Nevertheless, in order to the better understanding of this matter, I conceive it may not be amiss to distinguish here of two sorts of contradictions.

(1.) Such as appear immediately and self-evidently so, from the very terms of the proposition wherein they are expressed: The predicate implying in it a direct negation of the subject, and the subject mutually of the predicate; so that, upon the bare understanding of the signification of the terms or parts of the proposition, we cannot but apprehend and see the contradiction couched under them, and the utter inconsistency of the idea of one with the idea of the other: as if, for instance, we should say that light is darkness, or that darkness is light; or that a piece of bread of about an inch in breadth, and of an inch in length, is a man's body of about a yard and a half in length, and of a proportionable size in breadth; each of these propositions or assertions would import a direct and evident negation of the other, upon the very first sight or hearing, without any further examination of them at all. But then,

(2.) There is another sort of contradictions, which may not improperly be termed consequential. That is to say, such as show themselves, not by the immediate self-evidence of the terms, but by consequences and deductions drawn from some known principle by human ratiocination or discourse, and the judgment which men use to pass upon things in the strength and light thereof. In all which, since men may be deceived (nothing being more incident to common humanity than mistake), such contradictions cannot be so far relied upon, as to be taken for a perfect and sure measure of what the divine power can or cannot do. As for instance, if we should say, 'That for a body having been once destroyed, and transmuted into other human bodies, or some parts thereof successively, to be restored again with all the parts of it complete, and numerically the same, is a contradiction;' it is certain, however, that the contradiction here charged, does not manifestly appear such from any evidence of the terms, but is only gathered by such consequences and inferences as men form to themselves in their discourses upon this subject; and therefore, though possibly a truth, yet can be no clear proof, that it is impossible for an infinite power to do that which is here supposed and said to be a contradiction. But on the other side, touching the first sort of contradictions mentioned by us, and showing themselves by the immediate self-evidence of the terms; these, no doubt, ought to be looked upon by us out of the sphere or compass of omnipotence itself to effect: or otherwise, that old and

universally received rule, viz. that the divine power extends to the doing of every thing not implying in it a contradiction, must be exploded and laid aside by us as utterly useless and fallacious.

But now, with reference to the foregoing distinction of prime and consequential contradictions, if it should be here asked, whether a contradiction of the latter sort be not as really and as much a contradiction, as one of the former; I grant that it is (there being no *magis* and *minus* in contradictions); but nevertheless, not so manifestly nor so evidently such, nor consequently of so much force in argumentation, nor equally capable of having a conclusion or inference drawn from it, as the other is. For we are to observe, that, in the case now before us, a contradiction is not so much considered for what it is barely in itself, as for its being a medium to prove something else by it; and for that reason, we allow not the same conclusive force (though the same reality, could it be proved) to a consequential contradiction, which we allow to a prime and self-evident one, and such as shows itself to the very first view, in and by the bare terms of the proposition wherein it is contained.

Upon the whole matter therefore, if by true and sound reasoning I stand assured that God has affirmed or declared a thing, all objections against the same, though never so strong, (even reason itself, upon the strictest principles of it, being judge,) must of necessity fall to the ground. Forasmuch as reason itself cannot but acknowledge that men of the best wit, learning, and judgment, may sometimes take that for a contradiction which really is not so; but still, on the other side, must own it utterly impossible for a being infinitely perfect, holy, and true, either to deceive or be deceived in any thing affirmed or attested by it. And moreover, to carry this point yet something further; if a proposition be once settled upon a solid bottom, and sufficiently proved, it will and must continue to be so, notwithstanding any after-arguments or objections brought against it, whether we can answer and clear off the said objections or no: I say, it lessens not our obligation to believe such a proposition one jot. And if the whole body of Christians, throughout all places and ages, should with one voice declare, that they could not solve the foregoing objection urged against the resurrection, and taken from the continual transmutation of bodies into one another, or any other such like arguments, it would not abate one degree of duty lying upon them, to acknowledge and embrace the said article as an indispensable part of their Christian faith; nor would they be at all the worse Christians, for not being able to give a philosophical account or solution thereof; so long as, with a *non obstante* to all such difficulties, they stedfastly adhered to and acquiesced in the article itself. For so far as I can see, this whole controversy depends upon, and ought to be determined by the scriptures, as wholly turning upon these two points, viz. 1.

Whether a future general resurrection be affirmed and revealed in the scriptures, or no; and 2. Whether the said scriptures be the word of God. And if the matter stands thus, I am sure that none can justly pretend to the name of a Christian, who in the least doubts of the affirmative in either of these two points. And consequently, if this article stands thus proved, all arguments formed against it, upon the stock of reason or philosophy, come too late to shake it; for they find the thing already fixed and proved; and being so, it cannot, by after-allegations, be disproved. Since it being also a proposition wholly founded upon revelation, and the authority of the revelation upon the authority of the revealer, all arguments from any thing else are wholly foreign to the subject in dispute; and accordingly, ought by no means to be admitted, either as necessary proofs of it, or so much as competent objections against it. For whatsoever is contrary to the word or affirmation of a being infinitely knowing and essentially infallible, let it carry with it never so much show of truth; yet it certainly is and can be nothing else but fallacy and imposture. And upon this one ground I firmly do and ought to believe a general resurrection, though ten thousand arguments from the principles of natural philosophy could be opposed to it. But may it not then, you will say, upon the same terms, be here argued, that Jesus Christ (who is God blessed for ever) having expressly said of the bread in the holy sacrament, "This is my body," we ought to believe the said piece of bread to be really and substantially his body, how much soever we may apprehend it to contradict the principles of sense, reason, and philosophy? To this I answer, That the words here alleged, as pronounced by our Saviour, are confessedly in the holy scripture; but that every thing affirmed by God in scripture is there affirmed and intended by him literally, properly, and not figuratively, this I utterly deny. And since it is agreed to by all, and even by those whom in this matter we contend with, that many expressions in scripture cannot be understood but by a figure; and since, moreover, I grant and assert, that every thing affirmed by God in holy scripture ought to be believed in that sense only in which it is so affirmed; I will venture to allow the persons, who are for the literal sense of those particular words against the figurative, till doomsday, to prove that the literal sense only ought to take place here, and the figurative to be exploded and set aside; and if they can but prove this, I shall not fail, as I said before, to believe and assent to the thing so proved, whatsoever that which the world calls common reason and philosophy, shall or can suggest and offer to the contrary.

And this, I hope, may suffice to have been spoken upon the second proposition assigned for the prosecution of this subject, namely, That notwithstanding all the difficulties and objections alleged against this article of a general resurrection, there is yet

sufficient reason and solid ground for the belief of it. From whence we should now proceed to treat of the

III. And last proposition: *That a sufficiency of reason being thus given for the belief of the said article, all the difficulties and seeming repugnancies to reason, which it is charged with, do exceedingly enhance the worth, value, and excellency of that belief.*

But this, as I reckon, having been in effect done by us already; and the whole matter set in a full view, partly by clearing off the objections pretended to be brought against it from natural reason, in the two foregoing propositions; and partly by establishing the proof thereof upon the sure basis of those three great attributes of God, his omniscience, his omnipotence, and his essential veracity, all of them employed to warrant and engage our assent to it: we shall now at length come to consider the same more particularly in some of the consequences deducible from it. Such as are these two that follow:

1. We collect from hence the utter insufficiency of bare natural religion to answer the proper ends and purposes which God intended religion for. And,

2. We infer from hence also, the diabolical impiety of the Socinian opinions; and particularly of those relating to the resurrection. And here,

1. For the first of these, the insufficiency of natural religion to answer the proper ends which religion was designed for. This is most certain, that natural religion exceeds not the compass of natural reason; it neither looks higher nor reaches further, but both of them are commensurate to one another; and it is every whit as certain, that the soul of man being the proper seat and subject of religion, must needs be allowed to be immortal; and being withal both endued with and acted by the affections of hope and fear, that it must be supplied with objects proper and adequate to both, which yet nothing under an eternal happiness with respect to the one, and an eternal misery with reference to the other, together with a general resurrection from the dead, to render men capable of either, can possibly be. So that it is manifest from the very nature and essentials of religion, supposing it perfect, that the particulars now alleged by us, necessarily do and must come up to the utmost of what they stand alleged for. But then, on the other hand, can mere natural reason of itself, by full evidence and strength of argument, convince us of any of the aforesaid particulars? As, for instance, can it demonstrate that the soul is immortal? Or can it certainly prove, that there is a future and eternal state of happiness or of misery in another life? And that, in order to it, there shall be a resurrection of their mortal bodies after an utter dissolution of them into dust and ashes? No, there is nothing in bare reason that can so much as pretend to evince demonstratively any of

these doctrines or assertions. And what then can natural religion do or say in the case? For where the former is at a stand, the latter can go no further; so that there is an absolute necessity, if we would have any more certain knowledge of these matters, to fetch it from revelation. Forasmuch as the great apostle himself assures us, in 1 Cor. ii. 9, that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what things God has prepared for those that love him;" nor consequently, by a parity of reason, what miseries he has prepared for those that hate him. And if both of them are a perfect nonplus and baffle to all human understanding; is it possible for natural reason to comprehend what the heart of man cannot conceive? Nothing certainly can be a grosser contradiction, and that in the very terms of it, than such an assertion. But some perhaps may here say, that though natural reason, by its own strength and light, cannot give us a clear and particular account what these things are; yet it may however be able to discover to us that really there are such things. But in answer to this also, the same apostle tells us, in 2 Tim. i. 10, that it was our Saviour Christ who "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:" that is to say, cleared off all doubts about the immortal state and being of the soul, the everlasting felicities of the righteous, and the never-dying worm and torments of the wicked in another world. Touching all which, I affirm that nothing but divine revelation could give any solid satisfaction to the minds of men, either as to the *quid sit* or the *quod sit* of these things; that is to say, either by declaring the nature of them, *what they are*; or by proving the existence and being of them, *that they are*; besides that the very expression of "bringing a thing to light," must needs import its being hidden or undiscovered (at least to any considerable purpose) before.

But some possibly may here further object, that the heathens could not but, long before the times of our Saviour, have had a competent knowledge of these matters. For did they not, by what they discoursed of the Elysian fields, intend thereby to express the future blessedness of pious and virtuous persons? And by what they taught of Styx, Acheron, and Cocytus, and the torments of Prometheus, Ixion, and other famous criminals, design likewise to set forth to us the future miseries of the wicked and flagitious? No doubt they meant so: but still all this was built upon such weak and fabulous grounds, that the wiser sort of them did but despise and laugh at all these things. So that Juvenal, speaking of these matters, tells us in plain terms, *vix pueri credunt*, that children scarce believed them; though surely, if any thing could dispose the mind of men to an extravagant credulity, one would think that the age and state of childhood should. And then, as for the immortality of the soul, whatsoever Plato and other philosophers might argue in behalf thereof,

yet I am abundantly satisfied, that neither Plato nor all of them together have been able to argue more close and home to this subject, than those wits who have lived in the ages after them have done. And yet, upon the result of all, I do not find that any thing hitherto has been so clearly and irrefragably proved for the immortality of it; but that the most that can be done upon this argument is, that the soul cannot be proved by any principle of natural reason to be mortal. And that (though it does not prove so much as it should do) is yet, I think, no inconsiderable point or step gained. But after all, admitting the proof hereof to be as full and convincing as we could wish, then what can natural reason say to a general resurrection from the dead, that main article which we are now insisting upon? Why, truly nothing at all: and if this be the utmost which is to be had from natural reason upon this point, I am sure there is no more to be had from natural religion, which (to make the very best and most of it) is nothing but reason, not assisted by revelation. But,

2. The other thing, which we shall infer from the foregoing particulars, is, the horrible impiety of the Socinian opinions; and particularly of those relating to the resurrection, and the state of men's souls after death. The Socinians, who have done their utmost to overthrow the *credenda* of Christianity, are not for stopping there, but for giving as great a blow to the *agenda* of it too, by subverting, if possible, those principles which are to support the practice of it. Amongst which I reckon one of the chief to be, the belief of those eternal torments awarded by God to persons dying in a state of sin and impenitence, one of the most powerful checks to sin, doubtless, of any that religion affords; forasmuch as where there is one withheld from sin by the hopes of those eternal joys promised in the scripture; I dare affirm, that there are a hundred at least (if not more) kept from it by the fears of eternal torments. And the reason of this is, because those things by which the joys of heaven are represented to us, do by no means make so quick and lively an impression upon men's minds, as those by which the torments of hell, as they are described to us, are found to do. I am far, I confess, from affirming that this ought to be so; but as the state of mankind now generally is, there are but too many and too manifest proofs that actually it is so. And I do not in the least question, but that there are millions who would readily part with all their hopes of the future felicities, which the scripture promises them, upon condition that they might be secured from the eternal torments which it threatens.* And therefore, what a mighty en-

* They deny the torments of hell, and give this reason for it—"Quòd absurdum sit, Deum irasci in æternum, et peccata creaturarum finita pœnis infinitis mulctare, præsertim cum nulla hinc ipsius gloria illustretur." *Compendium Doctrinæ Ecclesiasticarum* in Poloniâ. Likewise Ernestus Sonnerus, a noted Socinian, has written a just treatise, with this title prefixed to it, "*Demonstratio Theologica et Philosophica, Quòd æterna impiorum supplicia non arguant Dei justitiam, sed injustitiam.*" And if they

couragement must the denial of eternal punishments needs be to all sorts of wickedness in the lives of men! And what shall be able to restrain the progress and rage of it, in the course of the world, when sinners shall be told, that after all the villanies committed by them here, nothing is to be expected or feared by them, when they have quitted this life, but a total annihilation or extinction of their persons, together with an endless continuance under the said estate? And is not this, think we, a sort of eternal punishment according to the sinner's own heart's desire? For since it so utterly bereaves him of all sense, that he can feel nothing hereafter, let him alone to fear as little here. And as for the resurrection from the dead, the same men generally deny that the wicked shall have any at all; it being, as they affirm, intended by God for a peculiar favour and privilege to the godly, who alone are to be the sons of the resurrection. But then, if these men find themselves pinched by such scriptures as that of the 25th of St. Matthew, and this of my text, so expressly declaring a resurrection "both of the just and the unjust;" in this case some of them have another assertion to fly to; namely, that the wicked shall indeed be raised again at the last day; but immediately after such a resuscitation shall be annihilated and destroyed for ever: an assertion so intolerably absurd, and so manifestly a scoff upon religion, that none but an atheist or Socinian (another word for the same thing) could have been so profane as even to think of it, or so impudent as to own or declare it. In fine, such is the diabolical impiety and the mischievous influence of the foregoing opinions upon the practices of mankind, and consequently upon the peace and welfare of societies and governments (all depending upon the said practices), that all sober and pious minds do even groan under the very

be unjust, we may be sure (as Dr. Tillotson in his sermon on Matt. xxv. 46, learnedly observes) that there shall be no such thing. And to show further how industrious these factors for the devil are, to rid men's minds of the grand restraint of sin, the belief of eternal torments, he sets down at the end of his *Demonstration* (as he calls it) several places of scripture, where the words *eternal* and *for ever*, signify not an infinite or everlasting, but only a finite, though indefinite duration. Likewise Diodorus Camphuysen, one of the same tribe, with a frontless impudence, in a certain epistle of his, requires such as should read it, "*Negare et ridere damnatorum pœnas, et cruciatus æternos;*" that is, not only to deny, but also to laugh at the eternal torments and punishments of the damned. And to make yet surer work, if possible, Socinus denies the soul even a capacity of being tormented after a man's death. "*Tantum id mihi videtur statui posse, post hanc vitam, animam, sive animum hominis non ita per se subsistere, ut præmia ulla penasve sentiat, vel etiam ista sentiendi sit capax, quæ mea firma opinio,*" &c. Socinus in *Quintâ Epistolâ ad Volkeliûm*. And elsewhere, "*Homo, sive anima humana nihil cum immortalitate habet commune.*" In short, I am so far from accounting the authors or owners of such horrid assertions to be really Christians, that I account them really the worst of men, if profaneness, blasphemy, and the letting loose of all sorts of wickedness upon the world can make them so. For according to these grand agents and apostles of Satan, wicked men, no less than the very brutes themselves (whose spirits also they affirm to return to God, as well as those of the other), being once dead, shall rise no more. And if they can but persuade men that they shall die like beasts, there is no question to be made, but that most of them will be quickly brought to live like beasts too.

thoughts of such foul invasions upon religion; and cannot but wonder, even to amazement, that the maintainers of such tenets were not long since delivered over into the hands of civil justice, to receive condign punishment by the sentence of the judge; as likewise, that those who deny the divinity and satisfaction of our Saviour, explode original sin, and revive several of the old condemned blasphemies, have not long before this been brought under the censures of the church in convocation. But if, on the contrary, the sheltering of some such rotten churchmen, as well as several others, from the dint of ecclesiastical authority, was one great cause of that so long and unaccountable omission of those sacred and most useful assemblies, for many years together, since the restoration (as many wise and good men shrewdly suspect it was), is it not just with God, and may it not, for ought we know, actually provoke him to deprive us even of the Christian religion itself? For assuredly that lewd, scandalous, and ungrateful usage which it has (of late years especially) found from some of the highest pretenders to it amongst us, has not only deserved, but upon too great grounds of reason seems also to prognosticate and forebode, and even cry out for no less a judgment upon the nation. But howsoever God, whose ways are unsearchable, shall think fit to dispose of and deal with us, let us not vainly flatter ourselves; but as we have been hitherto proving the certainty of a general resurrection, so let us still remember that the day of the resurrection will be as certainly a day of retribution too. A day in which the proudest and most exalted hypocrite shall be brought low enough, and even the lowest hypocrites much lower than they desire to be. A day in which the meanest and most abject (if sincere) member of our excellent (how much soever struck at and maligned) church, shall be raised to a most happy and glorious condition. Though, whether or no the church itself (God bless it) be, in the mean time, in so flourishing an estate, as some would persuade us it is, I shall not, I must not presume to determinè.

Now to God the great judge and rewarder of men, according to the vileness of their principles, as well as the wickedness of their practices, be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON XI.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE BLESSED TRINITY ASSERTED, AND PROVED
NOT CONTRARY TO REASON.

[Preached before the University of Oxford, between the years 1663 and 1670.]

COL. II. 2, latter part.

*To the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father,
and of Christ.*

Εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ Πατρὸς, καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

IN the handling and asserting of the doctrine of the Trinity, I do not remember any place so often urged and so much insisted upon by divines, as that in 1 John v. 7, "There are three who bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one:" a text fully containing in it the doctrine of three distinct divine persons in one and the same blessed and eternal Godhead; a doctrine unanimously received by the catholic Christian church; and warranted by the testimony of the most ancient, genuine, and unexceptionable records or copies of the New Testament, as well as of the most noted of the fathers concerning it; and that not only as of a single article, but rather as the sum total of our Christian faith, and not so much a part or member, as a full but short compendium of our religion. And yet, under these high advantages of credibility, we see what opposition it met with both from ancients and moderns; of the first sort of which, we have Arius with his infamous crew leading the van, by questioning the text itself, as if not originally extant in some two or three ancient copies of this epistle; and, of the latter sort, are those innumerable sects and sectaries sprung up since; some of them openly denying, and some of them (whose learning one would have thought might have been better employed) slyly undermining this grand fundamental; and while they seemingly acknowledge the truth, as it lies in the bare words of the text, treacherously giving it up in the explication.

As for the Socinians, who hold with the Arians, so far as they oppose us, though not in all which the Arians assert themselves, they have a double refuge. And first with them pretending the doubtfulness of the text, they would further evade it by a new interpretation of its sense, affirming that this expression, "these three are one," does not of necessity import a unity of nature,

but only of consent; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, being therefore said to be one, because they jointly and indivisibly carry on one and the same design; all of them jointly concurring in the great work of man's salvation.

Thus say they; but if this were indeed so, and if no more than matter of consent were here intended, where then (in God's name) would be the mystery, which the universal Christian church have all along acknowledged to be contained in these words? For that the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, should thus jointly concur in and carry on the grand business of saving mankind, is a doctrine expressing in it nothing mysterious, unaccountable, or surpassing man's understanding at all.

But further, if unity of consent only were here intended, why in all reason was it expressed by *ἐν εἰσι*, that is, they are one thing, being, or nature, and not rather by *εἰς τὸ ἐν εἰσι*, "they agree in one?" as in the very next verse to this, such a unity of concurrence in the spirit, the water, and the blood, is expressed by the same words *εἰς τὸ ἐν εἰσι*, manifestly importing no identity or unity of nature or being, but only of agreement in some certain respect or other; and doubtless, in so very near a neighbourhood and conjunction of words had the sense been perfectly the same, there can be no imaginable reason given, why the apostle should in the very same case thus have varied the expression.

But, for yet a further assertion of the great truth now insisted upon, this text out of the epistle to the Colossians will as effectually evince the same, as the place before mentioned; though perhaps not quite so plainly, nor wholly in the same way: that is to say, it will do it by solid inference and just consequence from the words, though not expressly in the very words themselves. And accordingly we may consider those words, *Εἰς ἐκτίνασιν τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ Πατρὸς, καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ*, two different ways, viz.

1. As the term *τοῦ Θεοῦ* may be taken personally, as in scripture sometimes it is, and then it will here signify the Holy Ghost, the third person of the blessed Trinity, though not indeed mentioned in this place in the same order in which the three persons commonly use to be; but the order, I conceive, may sometimes be less observed, without any change in or detriment to the article itself. And so this text out of the epistle to the Colossians will point out to us the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity, as well as that fore-alleged place, out of St. John, did. But,

2. If the word *τοῦ Θεοῦ* be here taken essentially, and for the divine nature only; then the particle *καὶ* will import here properly a distribution of *τοῦ Θεοῦ* (signifying the divine nature) as a term common to these two, *τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ*, as to two particular persons, distinguished by their respective properties. And so taken, it must be confessed that the term *τοῦ Θεοῦ* here will not signify the person of the Holy Ghost. But

granting all this; are there not, however, two other persons in the divine nature manifestly signified thereby? Forasmuch as the Godhead, here imported by τοῦ Θεοῦ, is expressly applied both to the Father and the Son, in those words τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ. And that, I am sure, (should it reach no further,) is a full and irrefragable confutation of the Socinians, the grand and chief opposers of the doctrine now insisted upon. For these men deny not a plurality of persons in the Godhead from any allegation or pretence of some peculiar repugnancy of the number of three to the same, more than any other number; but because they absolutely deny that there can be any more persons in the Godhead, than only one. And consequently, that a duality, or binary number of persons in it, would, in a Socinian's account, pass for no less an absurdity, than even a Trinity itself; the grand article controverted between us and them.

The words therefore being thus examined and explained, I shall draw forth the sense of them into this one proposition: viz.

That a plurality of persons, or personal subsistences in the divine nature, is a great mystery, and so to be acknowledged by all who really are and profess themselves Christians.

The discussion of which shall lie in these two things:

I. In showing what conditions are required to denominate a thing properly a mystery. And,

II. In showing that all these conditions meet in the article of the blessed Trinity.

I. And for the first of these: *the conditions required to constitute and denominate a thing properly a mystery* are these three:

1. That the thing so denominated be in itself really true, and not contrary to reason.

2. That it be a thing above the power and reach of mere reason to find it out before it be revealed. And,

3. That being revealed, it be yet very difficult for, if not above finite reason fully to understand and comprehend it. And here,

1. For the first of these conditions; a mystery must be a thing really true, and by no means contrary to reason. Where let me lay down this rule or maxim, as the ground-work of all that is to follow; to wit, that as nothing can be an article of faith that is not true, so neither can any thing be true, that is irrational. Some indeed lay this as their foundation, that men in matters of religion are to deny and renounce their reason; but if so, then let any one declare why I am bound to embrace the Christian religion, rather than that of Mahomet, or of any other impostor; and I suppose you will in the first place tell me, because the Christian religion was revealed and attested by God; whereas others, opposing it, were not so. To which I answer first, that

this very thing, that it was thus attested by God, is the greatest reason for our believing it true in the world; and as convincing as any demonstration in the mathematics; it being founded upon the essential, unfailing veracity of God, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. But then further, in the second place, I ask, how I shall come to know that this is revealed by God? Now here, if you will prove this to me (it being matter of fact), you must have recourse to all those grounds upon which reason uses to believe matters of fact when past; and accordingly show me, how that all these are to be found for the divine revelation of the Christian religion, and not of any other pretending to oppose or contradict it. And this, I am sure, is solid and true arguing in the case before us; and being so, what can it amount to less than a just demonstration of the thing here intended to be proved? I say, a demonstration proceeding upon principles of moral certainty; a certainty full and sufficient, and such as, being denied, must infallibly draw after it as great an absurdity in reference to practice, as the denial of any first principle can do in point of speculation. As for instance, I look upon the unanimous testimony of a competent number of sincere, disinterested eye or ear-witnesses; and which is more (in the present case inspired too), all affirming the same thing to be a ground morally certain, why we should believe that thing; forasmuch as the denial of its certainty would, amongst many other absurdities, run us upon this great one, that we can have no assurance or certain knowledge of any thing, but what we ourselves have personally seen, heard, or observed with our own senses; which assertion, if stuck to, would be as absurd and inconvenient in the transactions of common life, as to deny that two and two make four in arithmetic. And in good earnest it will be very hard (if possible) to assign any other sufficient reason why our Saviour, in Mark xvi. 14, upbraided some with their unbelief as inexcusable, only for not believing those who had seen him after he was risen.

In short, the ultimate object of faith is divine revelation; that is, I believe such a thing to be true, because it is revealed by God: but then my reason must prove to me that it is revealed; so that, this way, reason is that into which all religion is at last resolved.

And let me add a little further, that no one truth can possibly contradict another truth, for if two truths might contradict, then two contradictions might be true. And therefore, if it be true in Christian religion that one nature may subsist in three persons, the same cannot be false in reason. Thus much I confess, that take the thing abstract from divine revelation, there is nothing in reason able to prove that there is such a thing; but then this also is as true, that there is nothing in reason able to disprove it, and to evince it to be impossible.

But you will say, that for the same thing to be three and one
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is a contradiction, and therefore reason cannot but conclude it impossible. I answer, that for a thing to be one in that very respect in which it is three, is a contradiction; but to assert, that that which is one in this respect, may be three in another, is no contradiction.

But you will reply, that the single nature of any person is uncommunicable to another, as the essence of Peter is circumscribed within the person of Peter, and so cannot be communicated to Paul.

In answer to this, let it be here observed, that this is the constant fallacy that runs through all the arguments of the Socinians in this dispute; and all that they urge against a triple subsistence of the divine nature, is still from instances taken from created natures, and applied to the divine; and because they see this impossible, or, at least never exemplified in them, they conclude hence that it must be so also in this.

But this is a gross and apparent error in argumentation; it being a mere transition *à genere ad genus*, which is to conclude the same thing of different kinds; and because this holds true in things of this nature, to conclude hence, that therefore the same must be true also in things that are of a clean different nature, is a manifest paralogism.

To all these arguments, therefore, I oppose this one (I think) not irrational consideration: that it is a thing very agreeable even to the notions of bare reason to imagine, that the divine nature has a way of subsisting very different from the subsistence of any created being. For inasmuch as nature and subsistence go to the making up of a person, why may not the way of their subsistence be quite as different as their natures are confessed to be, one nature being infinite, the other finite? And therefore, though it be necessary in things created (as no one instance appears to the contrary) for one single essence to subsist in one single person and no more; does this at all prove that the same must be also necessary in God, whose nature is wholly different from theirs, and consequently may differ as much in the manner of his subsistence, and so may have one and the same nature diffused into three distinct persons? This one consideration, I say, well weighed and applied, will retund the edge and dint of all the Socinian assaults against this article: whom I have still observed to assert boldly, when they conclude weakly; and in all their arguments to prove nothing more than this, that the greatest pretenders to, are not always the greatest masters of, reason.

But here, before I dismiss this particular, I shall observe this, that for a man to prove a thing clearly, is to bring it by certain and apparent consequence, from some principle in itself known and evident, and granted by all: otherwise it would not be a demonstration, but an infinite progress.

Now this being supposed; in case any one shall so disprove

the Trinity, as to show that it really contradicts some such principle of reason evident in itself, and universally granted by the unprejudiced apprehensions of mankind; I should not be afraid to expunge this article out of my creed, and to discharge any man living from a necessity of believing it. For God cannot enjoin any thing absurd or impossible: but for any man to assent to two contradictory propositions, as true, while he perceives them to be contradictory, is the firstborn of impossibilities.

Reason therefore is undeservedly and ignorantly traduced, when it is set up and shot at, as the irreconcilable enemy of religion. It is indeed the very crown and privilege of our nature; a ray of divinity sent into a mortal body: the star that guides all wise men to Christ: the lantern that leads the eye of faith, and is no more an enemy to it, than an obedient handmaid to a discreet mistress. Those, indeed, whose tenets will not bear the test of it, and whose ware goes off best in the dark rooms of ignorance and credulity, and whose faith has as much cause to dread a discovery as their works; these, I say, may decry reason; and that indeed not without reason.

For ask such, upon what grounds they believe the truth of the Christian religion, whereas others so much oppose it: and here, instead of rational inducements and solid arguments, we shall have long harangues of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, of rolling upon the promises, of the spirit of assurance, and the preciousness of gospel dispensations, with many other such-like words, as show that they have followed their own advice to others, and wholly renounced their reason themselves.

But I cannot think or persuade myself, that God gave us eyes only that we may pluck them out, and brought us into this world with reason, that being born men, we might afterwards grow up and improve into brutes, and become elaborately irrational. No, surely; reason is both the gift and image of God, and every degree of its improvement is a further degree of likeness to him. And though I cannot judge it a fit saying for a dying Christian to make, that wish of Averroes, *Sit anima mea cum philosophis*; yet while he lives, I think no Christian ought to be ashamed to wish, *Sit anima mea cum philosophia*. And for all these boastings of new lights, inbeamings, and inspirations, that man that follows his reason, both in the choice and defence of his religion, will find himself better led and directed by this one guide than by a hundred directories. And thus much for the first condition. -

2. The second condition required to denominate a thing properly a mystery, is, that it be above the reach of reason to find it out, and that it be first knowable only by revelation. This, I suppose, I shall not be called upon to prove, it being a thing clear in itself.

But we have been told by some, that there are some hints and

traces of the article of the Trinity to be found in some heathen writers, as Trismegistus and Plato, who are said to make mention of it. To which I answer, first, that if there do occur such hints of a Trinity in such writers; yet it follows not hence, that they owed them to the invention of their own reason, but received them from others by tradition, who themselves first had them from revelation. But, secondly, to the case in hand; I answer more fully, that it cannot be denied, but that some Christians have endeavoured to defend the truth imprudently and unwarrantably, by bad arts, and falsifying of ancient writers; and that such places as speak of the Trinity are spurious, or at least suspicious: as the whole book that now goes under the name of Trismegistus, called his Poemander, may justly be supposed to be.

But that we may a little aid and help out our apprehensions in conceiving of this great mystery, let us endeavour to see whether, upon the grounds and notions of reason, we can frame to ourselves any thing that may carry in it some shadow and resemblance at least of one single, undivided nature's casting itself into three subsistences without receding from its own unity. And for this purpose, we may represent to ourselves an infinite rational mind, which, considered under the first and original perfection of being or existence, may be called the Father; inasmuch as the perfection of existence is the first and productive of all others. Secondly, in the same infinite mind may be considered the perfection of understanding, as being the first great perfection that issues from the perfection of existence, and so may be called the Son, who also is called $\delta \Lambda \acute{o} \gamma \omicron \varsigma$, the Word, as being the first emanation of that infinite mind. And then, thirdly, when that infinite mind, by its understanding, reflects upon its own essential perfections, there cannot but ensue an act of volition and complacency in those perfections, arising from such an intellectual reflection upon them; which may be called the Holy Ghost, who therefore is said to proceed both from the Father and the Son, because there must be not only existence, but also understanding, before there can be love and volition. Here then we see that one and the same mind is both being, understanding, and willing; and yet we can neither say that being is understanding, nor that understanding is willing; nor, on the contrary, that understanding is merely being, nor that willing is understanding. Forasmuch as the proper natural conception of one is not the conception of the other, nor yet commensurate to it. And this I propose, neither as a full explication, nor, much less, as a just representation of this great mystery; but only (as I intimated before, and intend no more now) as some remote and faint resemblance or adumbration thereof. For still this is and must be acknowledged inconceivably above the reach and ken of any human intellect; and as a depth in which the tallest reason may swim, and, if it ventures too far, may chance to be swallowed up too.

Nay, I think that it was a thing not only locked up from the researches of reason, amongst those that were led only by reason, I mean the Gentiles; but that it was also concealed from, or at best but obscurely known by the Jewish church. And Peter Galatine assigns a reason why God was not pleased to give the Jews any express revelation of this mystery; namely, that people's great stupidity and grossness of apprehension, together with their exceeding proneness to idolatry; by reason of the former of which, they would have been apt to entertain very uncouth and mistaken conceptions of the Godhead and the three persons, as if they had been three distinct gods; and thereupon to have been easily induced to an idolatrous worship and opinion of them; and therefore, that the unfolding of this mystery was reserved till the days of the Messiah, by which time the world should, by a long increase of knowledge, grow more and more refined and prepared for the reception of this so sublime and mysterious an article.

This was his reason for God's concealing it from the Jews; for that God did so, the Old Testament, which is the great ark and repository of the Jewish religion, seems sufficiently to declare; there being no text in it that plainly and expressly holds forth a Trinity of persons in the Godhead. Several texts are indeed urged for that purpose, though (whatever they may allude to) they seem not yet to be of that force and evidence, as to infer what some undertake to prove by them. Such as are,

(1.) Those words in the first of Genesis, *Bara Elohim*: where *Elohim* signifying God, and being of the plural number, is joined with *bara, creavit*, a verb of the singular. Whence some collect, that the former word imports a plurality of persons, and the latter a unity of essence. But others deny that any such peculiar meaning ought or can be gathered from that, which is indeed no more than an idiom and propriety of the Hebrew language. So that *Elohim*, applied to others besides God, is often joined with a singular number.

(2.) Another place alleged for the same purpose is that in Gen. i. 26, "Let us make man in our own image," where they say that there is a consultation amongst many persons in the Godhead. But to this also it is answered, that the term "Let us make," does not of necessity imply any plurality, but may import only the majesty of the speaker; kings and princes being accustomed to speak of themselves in the plural number: as, "We will and require you," and, "It is our royal will and pleasure." This is the common dialect of kings, and yet it infers in the speaker no plurality; for then surely a king would speak very unlike a monarch.

(3.) There is a third place also, in Isa. vi. 3, where the three-fold repetition of "Holy, holy, holy," applied to God, is urged by some to relate distinctly to the three hypostases of the God-

head. But this is thought by others to have so little of an argument in it, as scarce to merit any answer; it being so usual with all nations and languages to express any thing vehement or extraordinary, by thrice repeating the word used by them: suitable to which, are those expressions that occur in classic authors, as *Tergeminis tollit honoribus*, and *O ter felices*, and *Illi robur et æs triplex circa pectus erat*, with infinite the like instances: in all which, the manner of speaking serves only to express the greatness of the thing spoken of. So that these and such-like places of scripture carry not in them any such evident proof of the Trinity, as to persuade us that the Jewish church could from hence arrive to any clear knowledge of this article. The fore-mentioned Galatine indeed affirms the Talmudists to speak several things concerning it very plainly; and from hence concludes, that in regard the Talmud is a collection of the several sayings and writings of the old Jewish doctors upon the Old Testament, it must import, that since they wrote such things of the Trinity, and the Messiah, there was then a knowledge of these things in the Jewish church. But I fear the authority of those Talmudical writings will weigh so little in this case, that if the letter of the scripture will not otherwise speak a Trinity, but as it is helped out and expounded by the Talmud, few sober persons will seek for it there. The only solid proof, that makes towards the eviction of a Trinity from thence, I conceive to lie in those texts that prove the divine nature of the Messiah, whose coming was then expected by all the Jews. Otherwise, surely, the knowledge of this article could but very obscurely be gathered from the bare writings of Moses and the prophets, and consequently was by no means received with that explicitness in the ancient Jewish church, that it is now in the Christian.

As for the opinion of the modern Jews touching this matter, we shall find that these acknowledge no such thing as a Trinity, but utterly reject and explode it. And as for the Mahometan religion (which, being a gallimaufry made up of many, partakes much of the Jewish), that also wholly denies it. And the professors of it, in all their public performances of religious worship, with much zeal and earnestness frequently reiterate and repeat this article; "There is but one God, there is but one God;" not so much out of zeal to assert the unity of the Godhead, as to exclude the Trinity of persons maintained by the Christians.

I conclude therefore, that it is very probable that the discovery of this mystery was a privilege reserved to bless the times of Christianity withal, and that the Jews had either none, or but a very weak and confused knowledge of it. It was the great *arcanum* for the receiving of which the world was to be many ages in preparing. As long as the veil of the temple remained, it was a secret not to be looked into; a holy of holies, into which even the high priest himself did not enter. And thus much for

the second condition required to make or constitute a mystery; namely, that it be above the strength of bare reason to find it out, before it is revealed.

3. The third and last is this: that after it is revealed, it be yet difficult to be understood. And he who thinks the contrary, let him make trial. For although there is nothing in reason to contradict, yet neither is there any thing to comprehend it. We may as well shut a mountain within a mole-hill, or take up the ocean in a cockle-shell, as reach the stupendous sacred intricacies of the divine subsistence, by the short and feeble notions of a created apprehension. Reason indeed proves the revelation of it by God; but then having done this, here it stops, and pretends not to understand and fathom the nature of the thing revealed.

If any one should plead a parity of the case, as to this article of the Trinity, and that about transubstantiation; and allege, that since we deny not a Trinity, though we understand it not, but account it a mystery, and so believe it; why may we not take transubstantiation also in the number of mysteries, and believe it, though it be intricate and impossible to be understood?

To this I answer, (1.) in general, that no man discoursing or proceeding rationally upon this subject, refuses to believe transubstantiation merely upon this account, that it is impossible to be understood. (2.) I affirm, that the case between transubstantiation and the Trinity is very different; the former being contradicted by the judgment of that faculty of which it is properly the object; the latter being not at all contradicted, but only not comprehended by the faculty to which the judgment and cognizance of it does belong. To make which clear, we must observe, that both the bread and the body of Christ, about which transubstantiation is said to be effected, being endued with quantity, colour, and the like, are the proper objects of sense, and so fall under the cognizance of the sight and touch; which senses being entire, and acting as naturally they ought, they both can and do certainly judge of their proper objects, and upon such judgment find it to be a contradiction for a small body retaining its own proper dimensions, at the same time to have the dimensions of a body forty times greater. For one body to be circumscribed, and so compassed in one place, and at the same time to fill a thousand more, I say it is a contradiction; for it makes the same thing in the very same respect to be circumscribed and not to be circumscribed; circumscribed because encompassed in such a place; and yet not circumscribed, because extending itself beyond that place to many others.

But now, on the other side, the divine nature and the Trinity are not the objects of sense, and consequently sense passes no judgment upon them. But they are the objects of (and so only triable by) the mind and the understanding; taking in these things from the reports, not of sense, but revelation. Which

supreme faculty being thus informed by revelation tendering these reports to its apprehension, and withal finding that none of those rules or principles, by which it judges of the truth or falsity of what it apprehends, do at all contradict what revelation thus speaks and reports of the divine nature and the Trinity; it rationally judges, that they may and ought to be assented to.

For the stress of the point lies here, and let all the reason of mankind prove, if it can, that wheresoever the denomination of three is ascribed to any nature, it must of necessity multiply the nature itself, and not only its relations. Which being so, those that make the article of the Trinity parallel to that of transubstantiation, in point of its contrariety to reason, if they will speak and argue to the purpose, must undertake to prove, that for one infinite being or nature to be in any respect, or upon any account whatsoever, three, without a triplication of that nature, and so a loss of its unity, is as contrary and repugnant to some known principle of reason discoursing upon the reports of revelation, as for that thing, which all my senses tell me to be a little piece of bread, to be yet both for figure and dimension really a man's body, is contradictory to all those principles by which sense judges of those things that properly fall under the judgment of sense.

Let this I say be clearly and conclusively made out, and the business is done. But till then, they must give us leave to judge that there is as much difference between the article of the Trinity as stated by us, and that of transubstantiation as stated by them, as there is between difficulty and contradiction.

And now, if there be any whose reason is so unruly and overcurious as to be still inquisitive and unsatisfied, such must remember that when we have made the utmost explications of this article, we pretend not thereby to have altered the nature of the subject we have been treating of; which, after all, is still a mystery: and they must know moreover, that when the sacred mysteries of religion are discoursed of, the business of a Christian is sobriety and submission, and his duty to be satisfied, even though he were not convinced. The Trinity is a fundamental article of the Christian religion; and as he that denies it may lose his soul; so he that too much strives to understand it may lose his wits. Knowledge is nice, intricate, and tedious; but faith is easy; and what is more, it is safe. And why should I then unhinge my brains, ruin my mind, and pursue distraction in the disquisition of that which a little study would sufficiently convince me to be not intelligible? Or why should I by chewing a pill make it useless, which swallowed whole might be curing and restorative? A Christian, in these matters, has nothing to do but believe; and since I cannot scientifically comprehend this mystery, I shall worship it with the religion of submission and wonder, and casting down my reason before it, receive it

with the devotions of silence and the humble distances of adoration.

But here having drawn the business so far, I cannot but take notice of some of those blasphemous expressions which the Socinians use, concerning the sacred mystery of the Trinity; their terms, as I have collected some out of many, are such as these: *Deus tri-personatus. Idolum portentosum. Figmentum Satanæ. Antichristi Cerberus. Triceps Geryon. Idolum trifrons. Monstrum triforme. Deus incognitus, adeoque procul rejiciendus, et Satanæ conditori suo restituendus.* Now, that the authors of these ugly appellations show themselves not only bold and impious, but also (what by no means they would be thought) very unreasonable, will, I think, appear from these two considerations.

First, That the doctrine so broadly decried by them, is at least very difficult, and hardly comprehensible; and therefore, though it could not be proved true, yet, upon the same score, it can as hardly be proved false. But now these expressions ought to proceed not only upon the supposition of its bare falsity, but also upon the evidence and undeniable clearness of its falsity; or they must needs be impudent and intolerable.

He who says, that it is clear that there can be no such thing as the quadrature of the circle, makes an impudent assertion; for, though possibly there can be really no such thing, yet since there have been such considerable reasons for it, as to engage the greatest wits in the search after it, no man can rationally say that it is clear and manifest that there is no such thing. But besides, in this case, they deal very irrationally in rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity, because it is not intelligible; when not only in divinity, but also in philosophy (where yet, not faith, but strict ratiocination should take place), they acknowledge many things which the best reason will scarce be able to frame an explicit notion and apprehension of. Such as are the composition and division of continued quantities, and the like; which these men, I believe, will not deny, though it would set them hard to give a clear account of them.

Secondly, The same charge of absurdity lies against these men upon this account, that they prefer their particular reason before the united reason of a much greater number than themselves; every one of which were of as great industry to search, and of as great abilities to understand the mysteries of divinity as these men can be presumed to be.

Now, as this is much beside good manners, so indeed it is no less short of good reason; which will prove thus much at least: That when a few learned persons deny a proposition, and others forty times more numerous, and altogether as learned, do unanimously affirm it; it is very probable, that the truth stands rather with the majority. For if I should demand of these men, how they come to judge the doctrine of the Trinity to be false? they

must tell me, that they have studied the point, considered the text, examined it by the principles of reason, and that by the use of these means they come at length to make this conclusion.

But to this I answer, that others, who have studied the point as much, considered the text as exactly, and examined it by as strong principles of reason, as their opposites could pretend to, and so standing upon equal ground with them in point of abilities, have much the advantage of them in point of number.

But you will say, Must I therefore conclude, that which is affirmed by such a majority of persons so qualified is certainly true? I answer, No; but this I assert, that it is great reason, though their assertion appear never so strange to me, that I should yet suspend my judgment, and not peremptorily conclude it false; since there is hardly any means or way of ratiocination used by one to prove it a falsity, but by the very same way and means others persuade themselves that they as strongly prove it to be a truth.

And thus I think that these men's exceptions against this great article are, to such as understand reason, sufficiently proved irrational. But since these men reject the doctrine of the Trinity upon pretence both of its impiety and absurdity, it is but requisite that they should acquit themselves, in all their doctrine, from holding any thing either impious or absurd. But yet, that they cannot do so, these following positions maintained by them, will, I believe, demonstrate:

1. To assert, as Volkelius, in his second book *De Verâ Religione*, and the fourth chapter, not obscurely does, the matter of the universe to be a passive principle eternally co-existing with God the active, is impious, and not consistent with God's infinite power; for if matter has its being from itself, it will follow, that it can preserve itself in being against all opposition, and consequently that God cannot destroy it, which makes him not omnipotent.

2. To allow God's power to be infinite, and yet his substance to be finite, is monstrously absurd; but to assert, as Crellius in his book *De Attributis Dei*, in the 27th chapter, does, that his substance is circumscribed within the compass of the highest heaven, is clearly to make it finite.

3. To allow all God's prophecies and predictions recorded in scripture, of future contingent passages depending upon the free choice of man's will, to have been certain and infallible, and yet his prescience or foreknowledge of the same contingent things not to be certain, but only conjectural, as Socinus, in the 8th chapter of his *Prelections*, does affirm, is out of measure absurd and ridiculous.

4. To affirm Christ to be a mere creature, and no more, and yet to contend, that he is to be invoked and worshipped with divine worship, is exceedingly absurd, and contrary to all the

discourses of right reason; and withal, as offensive and scandalous to Jews and Turks, and such-like, as the bare affirmation of his divine nature can be pretended to be. But Socinus, though he denies this, yet is so earnest for the divine adoration and invocation of Christ, that he affirms that of the two, it is better to be a Trinitarian, than not to ascribe this to him.

5. To assert that the people of God, under the Jewish economy, lay under the obligation of no precept to pray to God, as Volkelius, in his 4th book *De Verâ Religione*, and the 9th chapter, positively affirms, is an assertion highly impious, and to all pious minds abominable.

6. To assert that it is lawful for a man to tell a lie, to secure himself from some great danger or inconvenience, as the same Volkelius, in the 4th book and 19th chapter does, is such a thing as not only consists not with piety and sincerity, but tends to drive even common honesty and society out of the world.

7. To assert that it is unlawful for Christians in any case to wage war, as Socinus himself does in his second epistle to Christophorus Morstinus, a Polonian commander, in which he allows him to bring his army into the field *in terrorem hostium*, provided that he neither strikes a stroke, nor draws blood, nor cuts off a limb: this, I say, is grossly absurd and unnatural, and contrary to the eternal principle of self-preservation; as engaging men, even for conscience sake, to surrender their lives and fortunes to any thief or murderer that shall think fit to require them. Neither can Socinus in reason so urge those words of our Saviour, in Matt. v. 9, of not resisting evil, in this case, if he will be but true to his own principle. For in his 3rd book *De Christo Servatore*, and the 6th chapter, disputing against Christ's satisfaction, he pleads, "that in regard it is," as he says, "contrary to reason, though the scripture should never so often affirm it, yet it ought not to be admitted or assented to." Now if this be his rule, I demand of him whether, for a man to preserve himself, and that even with the destruction of the life of the person assailing him, supposing that he cannot possibly do it otherwise, be not as undeniable a dictate or principle of natural reason, as any that he can pretend to be contradicted by Christ's satisfaction. And therefore, if he can lay aside Christ's satisfaction, though the scripture were never so express for it, in regard of the contrariety he pretends in it to reason; why may not we upon the same grounds assert the necessity of self-preservation in the instance of war, though the scripture expressly forbids it; since for a man to relinquish his own defence, is indubitably contrary to the dictates of nature, and consequently of reason.

But we need not recur to this, for the warranting men under the gospel to defend their lives, though with the destruction of those that would take them away. Only this I allege as an argument *ad hominem*, which sufficiently shows how slight and desultory

rious this man is in his principles and way of arguing, while at one time he frames to himself a principle for his present turn, and at another makes assertions and raises discourses, which that principle most directly overthrows. Now all the forementioned absurdities (with many more that might be reckoned) are the tenets of those who deny the article of the Trinity, because, forsooth, it is impious and absurd; that is, who strain at one gnat, having already swallowed so many vast camels. And yet these are the persons, who in all their writings have the face to own themselves to the world for those heroes whom God, by his special providence, has raised up to explain Christian religion, and to reform the doctrine of the church. I suppose, just in the same sense that the school of Calvin was to reform her discipline.

And now in the last place: because this article is of so great moment, and stands, as it were, in the very front of our religion, so that it is of very high concernment to all to be sound and thorough-paced in the belief of it: I shall show,

1. What have been the causes that have first unsettled, and at the last destroyed the belief of it in some. And,

2. What may be the best means to settle and preserve the belief of it in ourselves and others.

For the first of these: there are three things which I think have been the great causes that have taken some off from the belief of this article. As,

(1.) That bold; profane, and absurd custom of some persons, in attempting to paint and represent it in figure. He who paints God, does a contradiction; for he attempts to make that visible, which he professes to be invisible. The ministers of Transylvania and Sarmatia, rank assertors of the Socinian heresy,* in a certain book (wherein they make confession of their faith as to these articles) insist upon nothing so much, nor indeed so plausibly, for their rejection of the article of the Trinity, as those several strange pictures and images of the Trinity, which some persons had set up in several of their churches: sometimes describing it by one head carved into three faces, to which, so set up in a certain church, they subjoin this distich;

*Mense trifrons isto Janum pater urbe bifrontem
Expulit, ut solus regnet in orbe trifrons;*

that is to say, that the God having three faces had driven, or, if you will, outfaced poor Janus out of the world, who had but two. And likewise elsewhere such another;

*Jane biceps, anni tacite labentis orgo;
Trifrontem pellas, ni miser esse velis.*

* See a Latin book in 4to, entitled, "Præmonitiones Christi et Apostolorum, per ministros quosdam in Sarmatiâ et Transylvaniâ," &c.

Sometimes also they represent it by a ring set with diamonds, in three equidistant places of it; and sometimes by the picture of three men of an equal pitch sitting together at one table, and upon one seat; and sometimes the same is expressed by the image of an old man, a child, and a dove; one signifying the Father, one the Son, and the third the Holy Ghost. All which things being so contrary to the very natural notions which reason has of God, have brought many sober parts of the world to nauseate and abhor our whole religion, and to reject Christianity as only a new scheme of the old Gentile idolatry: and withal, have warranted the forementioned heretics to think they had cause for all those vile and wretched appellations, with which we show how they bespattered this divine mystery; which blasphemies will, no doubt, be one day laid at the door, not of those only who denied, but of those also who painted the Trinity; and by so doing made others to deny it. And indeed, so far has the common sort of mankind taken offence at these things, that if the belief of a God were not very deeply imprinted in man's nature, such men's cursed irrational boldness, in presuming to paint him, would go very near to bring all those about them, by degrees, to question the very Deity itself.

(2.) A second cause of the same evil, is the equally bold and insignificant terms which some of the schoolmen have expressed this great article by; who pursuing their own phenomena as undoubted truths, speak as peremptorily and confidently of this profound mystery, as if it were a thing obvious to the first apprehensions of sense. It was a good and a pious saying of an ancient writer, *Periculosum est de Deo etiam vera dicere*. No wonder therefore, if these men, discoursing of the nature and subsistence of God, in a language neither warrantable nor apprehensible, have by their modalities, suppositivities, circumincessions, and twenty such other chimeras, so misrepresented this adorable article of the Trinity to men's reason, as to bring them first to loathe, and at length to deny it.

(3.) A third cause, which has much weakened some men's belief of this article, has been the imprudent building it upon some texts of scripture, which indeed will evince no such thing. Such as those places which I mentioned out of the Old Testament; and such as one of the ancients once brought for a proof of the eternal generation and deity of the Word, from that expression of David, in Psalm xlv. 1; *Quisquamne dubitat*, says he, *de divinitate Filii, cum legerit illud Psalmistæ, "Cor meum eructavit verbum bonum?"* Concerning which and the like allegations, I shall only make one very obvious, but as true (and perhaps too true) a remark, that whatsoever is produced and insisted upon in behalf of any great and momentous point of religion, if it comes not fully close and home to the same, it is always found much more effectual to expose the truth it is brought for, than to sup-

port it, and to confirm the heretic it is brought against, than to convince him.

And thus having shown some of the causes that undermine men's belief of the article of the Trinity; I shall now assign some means also to fix and continue it in such minds as do already embrace it. And these shall be briefly two.

1. To acquiesce in the bare revelation of the thing itself; and in those expressions under which it is revealed. As for the thing itself, God has expressly said, that there are three above the rank of created beings, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And as for the words in which he has conveyed this to us, they are few, easy, and intelligible, and to be believed just as they are proposed; that is, simply, and in general, and without entering too far into particulars.

2. To suppress all nice and over curious inquiries into the peculiar nature, reason, and manner of this mystery. For God having not thought fit to reveal this to us any further than he has yet actually done, sufficiently declares it to have been his intent, that it should indeed be no further known, nor indeed searched into by us; and perhaps so far as it is yet unknown, it may to a created reason be also unknowable. For when we are once assured that the thing itself is; for us to amuse ourselves and others with bold perplexing questions (as they can be no better), how and which way it comes to be so, especially in matters relating to almighty God, must needs be equally irreverent and impertinent. Those words of an ancient commentator upon St. John, contain in them an excellent rule, and always to be attended to, *Firmam fidem, says he, mysterio adhibentes, nunquam, in tam sublimibus, illud quomodo aut cogitemus, aut proferamus.* Which rule, had it been well observed both in this and some other articles of our religion, not only the peace of particular churches and consciences, but also the general peace of Christendom, might in great measure have been happily preserved by it.

Let this therefore be fixed upon, that there is no obedience comparable to that of the understanding; no temperance, which so much commends the soul to God, as that which shows itself in the restraint of our curiosity. Besides which two important considerations, let us consider also, that an over-anxious scrutiny into such mysteries is utterly useless, as to all purposes of a rational inquiry. It wearies the mind, but not informs the judgment. It makes us conceited and fantastical in our notions, instead of being sober and wise to salvation. It may provoke God also, by our pressing too much into the secrets of heaven and the concealed glories of his nature, to desert and give us over to strange delusions. For they are only "things revealed" (as Moses told the Israelites in Deut. xxix. 29) "which belong to the sons of men," to understand and look into, as the sole and proper privilege allowed them by God, to exercise their

noblest thoughts upon: but as for such high mysteries as the Trinity, as the subsistence of one nature in three persons, and of three persons in one and the same individual nature, these are to be reckoned in the number of such sacred and secret things, as belong to God alone perfectly to know, but to such poor mortals as we are, humbly to fall down before, and adore.

To which God, incomprehensible in his nature and wonderful in his works, be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON XII.

PART I.

ILL DISPOSED AFFECTIONS BOTH NATURALLY AND PENALLY THE
CAUSE OF DARKNESS AND ERROR IN THE JUDGMENT.

2 THESS. II. 11.

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.

OF all the fatal effects of sin, none looks so dreadfully, none strikes so just a horror into considering minds, as that every sinful action a man does naturally disposes him to another; and that it is hardly possible for him to do any thing so ill, but that it proves a preparative and introduction to the doing of something worse. Upon which account, that notable imprecation of the Psalmist, upon his own and the church's enemies, in Psalm lxi. 28, namely, "that they may fall from one wickedness to another," is absolutely the bitterest and most severe of any extant in the whole book of God, as being indeed the very abridgment of that grand repository of curses, the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy; and that with the addition of something besides, and of so much a more killing malignity, than all of them put together; by how much the evil of sin is confessedly greater than the evil of any suffering for it whatsoever. The like instances to which, we have in the text now before us, of a sort of men, first casting off the love of the truth, and from thence passing into a state of delusion; and lastly, settling in a steady, fixed belief of a lie. By such wretched gradations is it, that sin commonly arrives at its full ἀκμή, or maturity. So that in truth, it is the only perpetual motion which has yet been found out, and needs nothing but a beginning to keep it incessantly going on. Accordingly, as every immoral act in the immediate and direct tendency of it, is certainly a step downwards, and a very large one too; so in all motions of descent, it is seldom or never found, that a thing so moving makes any stop in its fall, till it is fallen so far that it is past falling any further. And much the same is the case with a man, as to his spirituals; after he has been long engaged in a course of sinning, his progress in it grows infinite, and his return desperate.

Now in the words I have here pitched upon, as they stand in coherence with the precedent and subsequent verse, there are these two things to be considered:

First, A severe judgment denounced against a certain sort of men; namely, that "God would send them such strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." And,

Secondly, The meritorious procuring cause of this judgment in the foregoing verse; to wit, their "not receiving the love of the truth."

Where it is manifest, that by the words truth and a lie, are not to be here meant all truth and falsehood generally or indefinitely speaking, nor yet more particularly all that is true or false upon a philosophical account. For these truths or falsehoods the apostle does not in this place concern himself about; but such only as belong properly to religion, with reference to the worship of almighty God and the salvation of men's souls. In a word, by *truth* here, is meant nothing else but the gospel, or doctrine of Christianity; nothing being more frequent with the inspired penmen of holy writ, than to express the Christian religion by the name of *truth*; and that sometimes absolutely, and without any epithet or addition, and sometimes with some additional term of specification; as in Tit. i. 1, it is called, "The truth according to godliness;" and in Eph. iv. 15, "The truth as it is in Jesus;" with the like in several other places. So that still the great ennobling characteristic of the gospel is truth; truth eminently and transcendently such; and for that cause, by a distinguishing excellency, called the truth; from whence, by irrefragable consequence, it must also follow, that whatsoever is not truth, can be no part of Christian religion. A bottom so firm and sure for Christianity to rest upon, that it cannot be placed upon a surer and more unshakeable; besides this further advantage accruing to it thereby, that as truth and goodness by an eternal, indissoluble union (as strong as nature, or rather as the God of nature, can make it) stand essentially and inseparably combined, and even identified with one another; so, upon the same account, we may be assured that the goodness of the gospel cannot but adequately match and keep pace with the truth of it; both of them being perfectly commensurate, both of them equally properties of it, equally included in and flowing from its very constitution. So that the gospel being thus held forth to the world, as the liveliest representation and fullest transcript of those two glorious perfections of the divine nature, to wit, its truth and goodness; it must needs, by the first of them, recommend itself to our understandings, as the most commanding object of our esteem, and by the other to our wills, as the most endearing object of our choice.

Which being thus premised, if we would bring the entire sense of the words into one proposition, it may, I conceive, not unfitly be comprehended in this, viz.

That the not entertaining a sincere love and affection for the duties of religion, does both naturally, and by the just judgment

of God besides, dispose men to errors and deceptions about the great truths of religion.

This, I say, seems to me to take in the main, if not whole design of the words; for the better prosecution of which, I shall cast what I have to say upon them, under these following particulars: as,

I. I shall show how the mind of man can believe a lie.

II. I shall show what it is to receive the love of the truth.

III. I shall show how the not receiving the love of the truth comes to have such an influence upon the understanding or judgment, as to dispose it to error and delusion.

IV. I shall show how God can be properly said to send such delusions.

V. Since his sending them is here mentioned as a judgment (and that a very great one too), I shall show wherein the greatness of it consists. And,

VI. And lastly, I shall improve the point into some useful consequences and deductions from the whole. Of each of which in their order. And,

I. For the first of them: *to show how the mind of man can believe a lie.* There is certainly so great a suitableness between truth and a human understanding, that the understanding of itself can no more believe a lie, than the taste rightly disposed can pronounce a bitter thing sweet. The formal cause of all assent is the appearance of truth; and if a lie is believed, it can be so no further than as it carries in it the appearance of truth. But then, what and whence are these appearances? Appearance, no doubt, is a relative term, and must be between two; for one thing could not be said to appear, if there were not another for it to appear to. So that there must be both an object and a faculty, before there can be an appearance; and consequently, from one of these two must spring all falsehood at any time belonging to it. But the question is, from which of them? And in answer to it, it is certain that the object itself cannot cause a false appearance of itself. For if so, when the mind has conceived a false apprehension of God, God, who is the object, would be the cause of that false apprehension. But it is certain that objects operate not efficiently upon the faculties; for if they should, since the object is the same to all, viz. both those who entertain true, and those who entertain false apprehensions of it, it would be impossible for the same thing, so far as it is the same, to produce such contrary effects. It is the same body which appears to one of such a shape, and to another of a quite different. And therefore, the difference must needs be on the beholder's side, and rest in the faculty of perception, not in the thing perceived. This we may pronounce confidently and truly, that the object duly circumstantiated is never in fault, why it is not rightly apprehended.

Objects are merely passive; and if they were not so, men would certainly be both learned and better than they are; for neither can learning nor religion thrust itself into the heads or hearts of men, whether they will or no. Truth shows itself to be truth, and falsehood represents itself as falsehood (and so far is a good representer), whether men apprehend them so or no. For the object is not to be condemned for the failures of the faculty, any more than a man, who speaks audibly and intelligibly, is to be blamed for not being heard; nobody being bound to find words and ears too.

Well then; since a lie cannot be believed but under the appearance of truth, and since a lie cannot give itself any such appearance, it is evident, that if any man believes a lie, it is from something in himself that he does so. There are lies, errors, and heresies about the world, both plausible and infinite, but then they naturally appear what they are; and if truth be naked to the skin, error is and must be so to the bone; and the fairest falsehood can no more oblige assent, than the best dressed evil can oblige the choice.

And thus having given both falsehood, and the devil, the father of it, their due, and cleared even the grossest lie from being the cause that it is believed, and thereby left it wholly at the door of him who believes it; let us in the next place inquire, what may be the causes on the believer's part, which make any object, and particularly a lie, appear otherwise to him than really it is, and upon that account gain his belief. Now these are two.

1. An undue distance between the faculty and its proper object.
2. An indisposition in the faculty itself. And,

1. For the first of these. As approximation is one necessary condition of perception; so, too much distance prevents and hinders it, by setting the object too far out of our reach, and if the apprehensive faculty offers at an object so placed, and falls short of the apprehension of it, the fault is not in the object, but in that. And here, by distance, I mean not only an interval in point of local position, which, if too great, certainly hinders all corporeal perception; but likewise a distance, or rather disparity, of natures; such as is between finite and infinite, material and spiritual beings, consisting in the great disproportion there is between one and the other. And from hence it is, that the mind of man is incapable of apprehending any thing almost of God, or indeed of angels; the distance between their natures being so exceeding great. For though God, as the evangelist St. Luke tells us, in Acts xvii. 27, be "not far from every one of us;" nay, as it is in the next verse, that he is so near, or rather intimate to us, that "in him we live, and move, and have our being;" so that it is as impossible for us to exclude him, as it is to comprehend him; yet still the vast difference of his nature from ours makes the distance between them so unspeakably great,

that neither can our corporeal nor intellectual powers form any true idea of him. And from hence it is, that there is nothing about which the mind and apprehensive faculties of man have so frequently and foully blundered, as about the divine nature and persons, and (what is founded upon both) the divine worship. But,

2. The other cause which makes any object, and particularly a lie, appear otherwise than really it is, is the indisposition of the intellectual faculty; which indisposition, in some degree or other, is sure to follow from sin, both original and actual. For so much as there is of deviation from the eternal rules of right reason and morality in the soul; so much there will of necessity be of darkness in it too; and so much of darkness as there is in it, so far must it be unavoidably subject to pass a false judgment upon most things that come before it. Otherwise there is nothing in reason, considered purely and simply as such, which is or can be unsuitable to religion, or indeed to the nature of any thing; but so much the contrary, that if we could imagine a man all reason, without any bias from his sensitive part, it were impossible but that, upon the first sufficient offer, he should (as we may so express it) with both arms embrace religion. But the case has been much altered since the fall of our first parents, and the fatal blow thereby given to all the powers of man's mind; besides the further debilitation and distemper brought upon it, by many actual and gross sins. So that now the understandings of men are become like some bodily eyes, disabled from an exact discernment of their proper object, both by a natural weakness, and a supervening soreness too.

And thus I have accounted for the true cause which sometimes prostitutes the noble understanding of man to the lowest of dishonours, the belief of a lie; namely, either the remoteness of the faculty (whether in point of distance or difference) from its object, or some weakness or disorder in it; either of which will be sure to pervert its operation; and then a fault in the first apprehension of any thing will not fail to produce a false judgment, and that a false belief likewise, about the same. And so I proceed to the

II. Particular proposed, viz. to show *what it is to receive the love of the truth*. And this we shall find implies in it these two things:

1. A high esteem and valuation of the real worth and excellency of it; this is the first and leading act of the mind. Truth must be first enthroned in our judgment, before it can reign in our desires; and as it is the leading faculty, so it is the measure of the rest: for no man's love of any thing can rise above his esteem of it, nor can his appetites exert themselves upon any object not first vouched by his apprehensions. For which cause,

the Holy Ghost in scripture, the better to advance religion in our thoughts, represents it by things of all others the most highly accounted of in the world, as crowns, thrones, kingdoms, hidden treasure, and the like; all which expressions, though far from being intended according to the strict and philosophical truth of things, but rather as allusions to them, yet still were founded in the universally acknowledged course of nature, which ever was and will be, for men to be first allured by the worth of things, before they can desire the property or possession of them; and to consider the value, before they design to purchase. But, be the matter as it may, our affections, to be sure, will bid nothing for any thing, till our judgment has set the price. Thus St. Paul evinces his love to Christ from his transcendent esteem of him; "I account all things," says he, "but dung and dross, that I may win Christ," Phil. iii. 8. And he who accounts a thing as dung, will no doubt trample upon it as such. The rule of contraries will be found a clear illustration of the case. For hatred generally begins in contempt, or something very like it: and it is certain in matter of fact, as well as reason, that we leave off to love any thing or person, as soon as we begin to despise them. He who in scorn turns away his eye from looking upon an object, will hardly be brought to reach out his hand after it: let a man therefore set his understanding faculty on work, and put it to examine and consider, to view and review the intrinsic value of religion, what it is, and what it offers, before he proceeds to make it his portion so far as to be ready to quit all the world for it, should they both come to rival his choice as competitors; let him, I say, by a strict and impartial inquiry, descend into himself, and see whether he can upon these terms (for lower and easier it knows none) judge it absolutely eligible; and if not, let him assure himself, that without a passport from the judgment, it will never gain a free and full admittance into the affections. For still it is through the eye that love enters into the heart; nay, so mighty an influence has the judging faculty in this case, that it is much disputed whether the last dictate of the judgment about any object does not necessarily determine and draw after it the choice of the will; and perhaps there is scarce any point in moral philosophy of a nicer speculation and a harder decision; for as the affirmation of this on the one side seems to border upon Stoicism, and to intrench upon the freedom of the will; which after the supposal of all things requisite to its acting, ought nevertheless still to retain a power to exert or not exert an act of volition: so on the other side, to affirm, that after the understanding has made the last proposal of the object to the will, the will may yet refuse it, and go contrary to it, seems to infer this great inconvenience, that the will, in order to its acting, needs not the preceding act or conduct of the intellect to make a sufficient proposal of the object to it, since

after it is so proposed, it may notwithstanding divert its actings quite another way; and then, if it can in this manner proceed without a guide, the will is not so blind a faculty as the schools make it. For he who goes one way, when his guide directs him another, manifestly shows that he both can and does go without him. But I shall dispute this point no further; it being, as I conceive, sufficient for our present purpose, that the act of the understanding proposing the object, must of necessity precede, whether the act or choice of the will follow it or no. Though for my own part, I cannot see, that the holding the necessity of the will's following the last dictate or proposal of the understanding does at all prejudice its freedom (which is rather opposed to coercion from without, than to a determination from within); forasmuch as it was in the power of the will to have diverted the understanding from its application to any object, before it came to form its last judgment of it; and consequently, the whole proceeding of the understanding being under the free permission of the will, the act of the will closing with this last determination, was originally and virtually free, though formally and immediately, in this latter sense, necessary: as God necessarily does what he first absolutely decreed, and yet the whole act is free, since the decree itself was the free issue and result of his will. But I beg pardon, if I have dwelt too long upon this point. It was because I thought it requisite to show what is the part and office, and how great the force and power of the understanding, in recommending the truths of religion to the souls of men; that so they may not acquiesce in a slight, superficial judgment or apprehension of them; which, we may rest satisfied, will never have any considerable effect, or work any thorough change upon the heart; and if so, all will come to nothing; for the foundation is ill laid, and the superstructure cannot be firm. And upon this account, no doubt it is, that the scripture ascribes so much to faith; indeed, in effect, the whole work of man's salvation; and yet it is but an act of the understanding, and, properly and strictly speaking, can be no more; yet nevertheless of such a mighty and controlling influence upon the will is it, that if it be strong, vigorous, and of the right kind, it draws the whole soul after it, and works all those wonders which stand recorded of it in the 11th of the Hebrews, which from first to last is but a panegyric upon the invincible strength and heroic achievements of this grace. In a word, if a man, by faith, can bring his understanding to receive and entertain the divine truths of the gospel so as to look upon the promises of it as conveying the greatest good and happiness to man that a rational nature is capable of, and the threatenings of it as denouncing the bitterest and most insupportable evils that a created being can sink under, and both of them as things of certain and infallible event: this is for a man truly to value his religion, and to lay such a foundation of it in

his judgment, as shall never disappoint or shame his practice. Accordingly in the

2. Place, the other thing implied in, and intended by the receiving the love of the truth, is the choice of it, as of a thing transcendently good, and particularly agreeable to our condition. Generals, we commonly say, are fallacious; but it is certain that they are always faint. And therefore it is not merely what is good, as to the general notion of it (which can minister to little more than bare theory and discourse), but particularly what is good for me, which must engage my practice. To esteem a thing, we have shown, is properly an act of the understanding; but to choose it, is the part and office of the will. And choosing is a considerable advance beyond bare esteem: forasmuch as it is the end of it, and consequently perfects it, as the end does every action which is directed to it. It is the most proper, genuine, and finishing act of love. For the great effect of love is to unite us to the thing we love; and the will is properly the uniting faculty, and choice the uniting act, which brings the soul and its beloved object together. Judgment and esteem, indeed, is that which offers and recommends it to the soul; but it is choice, which makes the match. For the truth is, the soul of man can do no more, nor reach further, than first to esteem an object, and then to choose it. And therefore, till we have made religion our fixed choice, it only floats in the imagination, and is but the business of talk and fancy. But it is the heart, after all, which must appropriate and take hold of the great truths of Christianity for its portion, its happiness, and chief good. And then, and not till then, a man is practically and in good earnest a Christian; and that which before was but notion and opinion hereby passes into reality and experience; and from a mere name, into the nature and substance of religion. For still, if a man would make his faith, or religion, a vital principle for him to live and act by, it must be such a one as the apostle tells us, "works by love;" there must be something of this blessed flame to invigorate and give activity to it. But where a man neither loves nor likes the thing he believes, it is odds but in a little time he may be brought also to cast off the very belief itself; and, in the mean while, it is certain that it can have no efficacy, no operation, or influence upon his life or actions; which is worse than no belief at all; for better, a great deal, none, than to no purpose.

And thus having shown what is meant by, and implied in, the receiving the love of the truth, it may, I conceive, help us to an easy and natural account of its opposite or contrary, to wit, the rejecting, or not receiving the same; the great sin, as we before observed, for which the persons here in the text stand concluded under so severe a doom. For the further explication of which, we may very rationally suppose the condition of those men to have been this, viz. That upon the preaching of Christianity,

the truth of it quickly overpowered their assent, and broke in upon their apprehensions with the highest evidence and conviction; but the searching purity and spirituality of the same doctrines equally encountering their worldly interests, and their predominant beloved corruptions, soon caused in their minds a secret loathing of the severity of those truths, and so, by degrees, a direct hatred and hostility against them, as the great disturbers of those pleasures, and interrupters of the caresses of those lusts, which had so bewitched their hearts and seized their affections. It is wonderful to consider what a strange combat and scuffle there is in the soul of man, when clear truths meet with strong corruptions; one faculty or power of it embracing a doctrine, because true; and another, with no less fury, rising up against it, because severe and disagreeable. Thus, what should be the reason that those high and excellent precepts of Christianity, requiring purity of heart, poverty of spirit, chastity of mind, hatred of revenge, and the like, find so cold a reception, or rather so sharp a resentment in the world? Is it because men think they are not truths? By no means, but because they are severe, grating, uneasy truths; they believe them sufficiently, and more than they desire, but they cannot love them; and for that reason, and no other, they are rejected and thrown aside in the lives and practices of men, not because they cannot or do not convince their understandings, but because they thwart and bid defiance to their inclinations. Truth is so connatural to the mind of man, that it would certainly be entertained by all men did it not by accident contradict some beloved interest or other. The thief hates the break of day; not but that he naturally loves the light as well as other men, but his condition makes him dread and abhor that which of all things he knows to be the likeliest means of his discovery. Men may sometimes frame themselves to hear and attend to the mortifying truths of Christianity; but then they hear them only as they use to hear of the death of friends, or the story of a lost estate; they are true, but troublesome and vexatious. So often does the irksomeness of the thing reported make men angry with the truth of the report, and sometimes with the very person of the reporter too. And, therefore, let none wonder if God inflicts so signal a judgment upon this sort of sin: for when men shall resolutely reject clear, pregnant, and acknowledged (as well as important) truths, only because they press hard upon their darling sin, and would knock them off from the pleasing embraces of the world and the flesh, and from dying in them; what do they else, but sacrifice the glory of their nature, their reason, to their brutality, and make their noblest perfections bow down and stoop to their basest lusts? What do they, I say, but crush and depress truth, to advance some pitiful, sensual pleasure in the room of it; and so, like Herod, strike off the Baptist's head, only to reward the

dances of a strumpet? This is the great load of condemnation which lies so heavy upon the world, as St. John tells us, "that men see the light, but love darkness," bend before the truth of a doctrine, but abhor its strictness and spirituality. The doctrine of Christianity being in this, like that forerunner of Christ just now mentioned by us, who was indeed (as our Saviour himself styled him) a shining, but withal a burning light. And as the shining both of the one and the other, in the glorious evidence of truth beaming out from both, could not but, even in spite of sin and all the powers of darkness, be infinitely pleasing to all who had the sight thereof; so its burning quality, exerting itself in the searching precepts of self-denial and mortification, was, no doubt, to all vicious and depraved minds, altogether as tormenting and intolerable. And so I proceed to the

III. Particular proposed by us. Which was to show *how the not receiving the love of the truth into the will and affections, comes to dispose the understanding to error and delusion.* Now, I conceive, it may do it in these following ways:—

1. By drawing off the understanding from fixing its contemplation upon a disgusted, offensive truth. For though it is not in the power of the will, when the understanding apprehends a truth clearly and distinctly, to countermand its assent to it; yet it has so great an influence upon it, that it is able antecedently to hinder it from taking that truth into a full and thorough consideration. And while the mind is not taken up with an actual attention to the truth proposed to it, so long it is obnoxious to the offers and impressions of the contrary error. For the first adherencies, or rather applications of the soul to truth, are very weak and imperfect, till they are furthered and confirmed by a frequent converse with it, and so, by degrees, come to have the general notions of reason endeared and made familiar to the mind by renewed acts of attention and speculation; which ceasing, if a falsehood comes recommended to the soul with any advantage, that is to say, with agreeableness, though without argument, it is ten to one but it enters and takes possession: and then the poison is infused; let the man get it out again as he can. He who will not insist attentively and closely upon the examination of any truth, is never like to have his mind either clearly informed of it or firmly united to it. For want of search is really and properly the keeping off the due approximation of the object, without which a true apprehension of it is impossible. So that if a man has corrupt affections, averse to the purity and excellency of any truth, it is not imaginable that they will suffer his thoughts to dwell long upon it, but will do their utmost to divert and carry them off to some other object, which he is more inclined to and enamoured with; and then, what wonder is it if under such circumstances the mind is betrayed by the bias of

the affections, and so lies open to all the treacherous inroads of fallacy and imposture? As for instance, he whose corrupt nature is impatient of any restraint from morality or religion, will be sure to keep his mind off from them, as much as possibly he can; he will not trouble himself with any debates or discourses about the truth or evidence of such things as he heartily wishes were neither evident nor true. In a word, he will not venture his meditations upon so unwelcome and so afflicting a subject: and thus having rid himself of such notions, the contrary documents of atheism and immorality still bringing with them a compliance with those affections which all thoughts of religion were so grievous to, will soon find an easy, unresisted admittance into an understanding naked and unguarded against the several arts and stratagems of the grand deceiver. A man indeed may be sometimes so surprised, as not to be able to prevent the first apprehension and sight of a truth; but he is always able to prevent the consideration of it; without which, the other can work upon him very little. For though apprehension shows the object, it must be consideration which applies it. But again,

2. A will vitiated, and grown out of love with the truth, disposes the understanding to error and delusion, by causing in it a prejudice and partiality in all its reflections upon, and discourses about it. He who considers of a thing with prejudice, has judged the cause before he hears it, and decided the matter, not as really it is, but as it either crosses or comports with the principles which he is already prepossessed with; the understanding, in such a case, being like the eye of the body, viewing a white thing through a red glass; it forms a judgment of the colour, not according to the thing it sees, but according to that by which it sees. And upon the like account it is, that the will and the affections never pitch upon any thing as odious, but that sooner or later they bribe the judgment to represent it to them as ugly too. We know the miracles, the astonishing works, and excellent discourses of our Saviour could not strike the hearts of those whom he preached to, through the mighty prejudice they had conceived against his person and country. But that they still opposed all, even the most cogent and demonstrative arguments he could bring for his doctrine, with that silly exception, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" And that one ridiculous proverb, that "no good could come out of Galilee," as slight as it was, yet proved strong enough to obstruct their assent, and arm their minds against that high conviction and mighty sway of evidence, which shined forth in all his miraculous works: so that this senseless saying alone fully answered, or (which was as effectual for their purpose) absolutely overbore them all. In like manner, we find it elsewhere observed by our Saviour himself, of that selfish, rotten, and yet demure generation of men, the Pharisees, that "they could not believe, because they received

honour one of another," John v. 44. They had, it seems, bewitched the people into an extravagant esteem and veneration of their sanctity, and by that means had got no small command over their purses, their tables, and their families; nay, and more than ordinary footing and interest in the Jewish court itself. So that they ruled without control, getting the highest seats in synagogues, that is, in their chief assemblies or consistories; and they loved also to feed as high as they sat, still providing themselves with the best rooms, and not the worst dishes (we may be sure) at feasts. Nor would ever such pretenders have fasted twice a week, but that they knew it afforded them five days besides to feast in; so that having thus found the sweets of a crafty long-practised hypocrisy, from which they had reaped so many luscious privileges, they could not but have a horrible prejudice against the strictness of that doctrine, which preached nothing but self-denial, humility, and a contempt of the honours and emoluments of the world, which they themselves so passionately doted upon; and therefore no wonder if they threw it off as a fable and an imposture, though recommended with all the attestations of divine power, which had in them a fitness to inform or convince the reason of man. So far did the corruption of their will advance their prejudice, and their prejudice destroy their judgment. But,

3. The third and last reason which I shall assign for proving, that the will's not embracing the love of the truth betrays the understanding to error and delusion, is from the peculiar malignity which is in every vice, or corrupt affection, to darken and besot the mind, the *νοῦς*, the great guide and superintendant of all the faculties of the soul; so near a connexion, or rather cognition is there between the moral and intellectual perfection of it, as I have elsewhere observed,* that a great flaw in the former never fails in the issue to affect the latter; though possibly how this is done is not so easily accounted for. Nevertheless, that irrefragable argument *experience* sufficiently proves many things to be so, which it is not able to explain, nor indeed pretends to. Aristotle has observed of the vices of the flesh (and his observation is in a great degree true of all other), that they do peculiarly cloud the intellect, and debase a man's notions, emasculate his reason, and weaken his discourse; and in a word, make him upon all these accounts much less a man than he was before. And for this cause, no doubt, has the same author declared young men, in whom the forementioned sort of vices is commonly most predominant, not competent auditors of moral philosophy, as having turned the force of their minds to things of a quite contrary nature. But this mischief reaches much further; for sure it is, that when wise men (be their years what they will) become

* The reader may please to cast his eye upon Sermon xxvi. of the first volume, where this subject is more professedly and largely treated of.

vicious men, their wisdom leaves them; and there appears not that keenness and briskness in their apprehensive and judging faculties, which had been all along observed in them, while attended with temperance and guarded with sobriety. So that, upon this fatal change, they do not argue with that strength, distinguish with that clearness, nor in any matter brought into debate, conclude with that happiness and firmness of result, which they were wont to do.

Show me so much as one wise counsel or action of Marcus Antonius, a person otherwise both valiant and eloquent, after that he had subdued his understanding to his affections, and his affections to Cleopatra. How great was Lucullus in the field, and how great in the academy! But abandoning himself to ease and luxury, Plutarch tells us that he survived the use of his reason, grew infatuated, and doted long before he died, though he died before he was old.

All which tends to demonstrate, that such is the nature of vice, that the love thereof entering into the will, and thrusting out the love of truth, it is no wonder if the understanding comes to sink into infatuation and delusion; the ferment of a vicious inclination lodged in the affections, being like an intoxicating liquor received into the stomach, from whence it will be continually sending thick clouds and noisome steams up to the brain. Filth and foulness in the one will be sure to cause darkness in the other. Was ever any one almost observed to come out of a tavern, an alehouse, or a jolly meeting, fit for his study, or indeed for any thing else, requiring stress or exactness of thought? The morning, we know, is commonly said to be a friend to the muses, but a morning's draught was never so. And thus having done with the third particular proposed from the text, come we now to the

IV. Viz. To show *how God can be properly said to send men delusions*. "God," says the apostle, 1 John i. 5, "is light, and in him there is no darkness at all." And that which in no respect is in him, cannot, we may be sure, proceed from him. Upon which account, it must needs be very difficult to show and demonstrate, how God can derive ignorance, darkness, and deception into the minds of men. And the great difficulty of giving a rational and good account of this, and such-like instances, drove Manes, an early heretic, with his followers (called all along the Manichees, or Manicheans), to assert two first, eternal, independent beings, one the cause of all good, the other the cause of all evil; as concluding, that the evil which is in the world must needs have some cause, and that a being infinitely good could not be the cause of it; and consequently, that there must be some other principle from the malignity of whose influence flowed all the ignorance, all the wickedness and villany, which either is or

ever was in the world. But the generally received opinion of the nature of evil, viz. That it is but a mere privation of good, and consequently needs not an efficient, but only a deficient cause, as owing its production and rise, not to the force, but to the failure of the agent; this consideration, I say, has rendered that notion of Manes of a first independent principle of evil, as useless and impious in divinity, as it is absurd in philosophy.

This principle therefore being thus removed, let us see how it can comport with the goodness and absolute purity of the divine nature, to have such effects ascribed to it, and how, without any derogation to the glorious attribute of God's holiness, he can be said to send the delusions, mentioned in the text, into the minds of men. Now, I conceive, he may be said to do it these four ways:

1. First by withdrawing his enlightening influence from the understanding. This, I confess, may seem at first an obscure, enthusiastic notion to some: but give me leave to show that there is sufficient ground for it in reason. And for this purpose, I shall observe to you, that it was the opinion of some philosophers, particularly of Aristotle, and since him of Averroes, Avicenna, and some others, that there was one universal soul belonging to the whole species or race of mankind, and indeed to all things else according to their capacity: which universal soul, by its respective existence in, and communication of itself to each particular man, did exert in him those noble acts of understanding and ratiocination, proper to his nature; and those also in a different degree and measure of perfection, according as the different crasis or disposition of the organs of the body made it more or less fit to receive the communication of that universal soul; which soul only (by the way) they held to be immortal; and that every particular man, both in respect of body and spirit, was mortal; his spirit being nothing else but a more refined disposition and elevation of matter.

Others, detesting the impiety of this opinion, did allow to every individual person a distinct immortal soul, and that also endued with the power and faculty of understanding and discourse inherent in it. But then, as to the soul's use and actual exercise of this faculty, upon their observing the great difference between the same object, as it was sensible, and affected the sense, and as it was intelligible, and moved the understanding, they held also the necessity of another principle without the soul, to advance the object, *à gradu sensibili ad gradum intelligibilem*, as they speak, and so to make it actually fit to move and affect the intellect. And this they called an *intellectus agens*; so that although the soul was naturally endued with an intellectual power; yet, by reason of the great distance of material, corporeal things from the spiritual nature of it, it could never actually apprehend them, till this *intellectus agens* did irradiate and shine

upon them, and so prepare and qualify them for an intellectual perception. And this *intellectus agens*, some, and those none of the lowest form in the Peripatetic school, have affirmed to be no other than God himself, that great light which enlightens not only every man, but every thing (according to its proportion) in the world.

The result and application of which discourse to my present purpose is this; that certainly those great masters* of argument and knowledge could not but have seen some weighty and considerable reasons thus to interest an external principle in the intellectual operations of man's mind. And so much of reason do I, for my part, reckon to be the bottom of this opinion, that I have been often induced to think, that if we should but strip things of mere words and terms, and reduce notions to realities, there would be found but little difference (so far as it respects man's understanding) between the *intellectus agens* asserted by some philosophers, and the universal grace, or common assistances of the Spirit, asserted by some divines (and particularly by John Goodwin, calling it, "the Pagans' debt and dowry"); and that the assertors of both of them seem to found their several assertions upon much the same ground; namely, upon their apprehension of the natural impotence of the soul of man, immersed in matter, to raise itself to such spiritual and sublime operations; as we find it does, without the assistance of some higher and divine principle. And accordingly, this being admitted, that the soul is no other-

* For it is ascribed to no less persons than to Plato, and Aristotle after him (as borrowing it from him), and that by several of the most eminent interpreters of the latter, both ancient and modern; all of them proceeding upon this ground, that in order to the actual intellection of any object, there is a spiritual intellectual light necessary to enable the object to move or affect the intellective faculty, which yet the object cannot give to itself, nor yet strike or move the said faculty without it. And therefore they say, that there is required an *intellectus agens*, or being distinct both from the object and the faculty too, which may so advance and spiritualize the object, by casting a higher light upon it, as to render it fit and prepared thereby for an intellectual perception. And forasmuch as every thing which is such or such secondarily, and by participation from another, supposes some other to be so primarily and originally by and from itself; and since God is the *primum intelligibile* in the intellectual world, as the sun is the *primum visibile* in the sensible and material world; they affirm the same necessity of a superior and intellectual light issuing from God, in order to move the intellect, and form in it an intellectual apprehension of things, which there is of a light beaming from the sun, for the causing an act of vision in the visive faculty. And this they insist upon, not only as a similitude for illustration, but as a kind of parallel case, as to this particular instance, how widely soever the things compared may differ from one another upon many other accounts. This, I say, was held by several of the most noted of the Peripatetic tribe; though others, I know, who are professedly of the same, do yet in this matter, go quite another way; allowing indeed, that there is and must be an *intellectus agens*, but that it is no more than a different faculty of the same soul, or a different function of the same faculty; but by no means an agent, or intelligent being distinct from it. This, I confess, is of very nice speculation, and made so by the arguments producible on both sides, and consequently not so proper to make a part in such a popular discourse as I am here engaged in; nor should I have ever mentioned it barely as a philosophical point, but as I conceived it improvable into a theological use, as I have endeavoured to improve it in the discourse itself; to which, therefore, I have chosen rather to annex this by way of annotation, than to insert it into the body thereof.

wise able to exert its intellectual acts, than by a light continually flowing in upon it from the great fountain of light (whether that light assists it by strengthening the faculty itself, or brightening the object, or both, it matters not, since the result of both, as to the main issue of the action, will be the same): I say, this being admitted, that God beams this light into man's understanding, and that, as a free agent, by voluntary communications; so that he may withdraw or suspend what he thus communicates, as he pleases; how natural, how agreeable to reason is it to conceive, that God, being provoked by gross sins, may deliver the sinner to delusion and infatuation, by a suspension and subtraction of this light? For may not God blast the understanding of such a one, by shutting up those influences which were wont to enliven his reason in all its discourses and argumentations. Certain it is, that this frequently happens: and that the wit and parts of men, "who hold the truth in unrighteousness," are often blasted, so that there is a visible decay of them, a strange unusual weakness and failure in them; and this is not to be ascribed to any known cause in the world, but to the just judgment of God, stopping that eternal fountain from which they had received their continual supplies. This to me seems very intelligible, and equally rational: and accordingly, may pass for the first way by which God may be said to send delusion into the minds of men. But,

2. God may be said to do the same by giving commission to the great deceiver and spirit of falsehood to abuse and seduce the sinner. A signal and most remarkable example of which, we have in 1 Kings xxii. 22, when Ahab was grown full ripe for destruction, we find this expedient for his ruin pitched upon; viz. That he was to be persuaded to go up to Ramoth Gilead, to fall there. But how and by what means was this to be effected? Why, the text tells us, that "there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said I will go forth, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And God said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also; go forth and do so." We see here the evil spirit sent forth, and fully empowered by almighty God to accomplish his delusions upon a bold incorrigible sinner. And what method God took then, we cannot deny, or prove it unreasonable, but that he may take still, where the same sins prepare and fit men for the same perdition.

How the devil conveys his fallacies to the minds of men, and by what ways and arts he befools their understanding, I shall not here dispute; nor, being sure of the thing itself, from the word of God, that it is so, shall I be much solicitous about the manner how. But thus much we may truly, and, by consequence, safely say, that since it is too evident, that the devil can make false resemblances and representations of things pass before our bodily eyes; so that we shall be induced to believe, that we see

that, which physically, and indeed, we do not see; why may he not also suggest false images of things, both to the imagination and to the intellectual eye of the mind (as different as they are from one another), and so falsify our notions and disorder our apprehensions? It is plainly asserted in 2 Cor. iv. 4, that "the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not." The great sophister and prince of darkness (God permitting him) can strangely blindfold our reason, and muffle our understanding; and, no doubt, the chiefest cause, that most of the obstinate, besotted sinners of the world are not sensible that the devil blinds and abuses them is, that he has indeed actually done so already.

For, how dreadfully did God consign over the heathen world to a perpetual slavery to his deceits? They worshipped him, they consulted with him, and so absolutely were they sealed up under the ruling cheat, that they took all his tricks and impostures for oracle and instruction. And the truth is, when men, under the powerful preaching of the gospel (such as the church of England has constantly afforded), will grow heathens in the viciousness of their practices, it is but just with God to suffer them, by a very natural transition, to grow heathens too in the grossness of their delusions.

3. A third way by which God may be said to send men delusions, is by a providential disposing of them into such circumstances of life, as, through a peculiar suitableness to their corruption, have in them a strange efficacy to delude and impose upon them. God, by a secret, unobserved trace of his providence, may cast men under a heterodox, seducing ministry, or he may order their business and affairs so that they shall light into atheistical company, grow acquainted with heretics, or possibly meet with pestilent books, and with arguments subtilly and speciously urged against the truth: all which falling in with an ill-inclined judgment, and worse ordered morals, will wonderfully recommend and set off the very worst of errors to a mind thus prepared for their admission: no guard being sufficient to hinder their entering and taking possession, but where caution and virtue keep the door. The want of which quality has been the grand, if not sole cause, which in all ages has brought so many over to, and in the issue settled and confirmed them in some of the foulest sects and absurdest heresies, that ever infested the Christian church; and so deeply have the wretches drank in the delusion, that they have lived and died in it, and transmitted the surviving poison of it to posterity. And yet, as far and wide as such heresies have reigned and raged in their time, and as woful a havoc as they have made of souls, they have been often taken up at first by mere accident, or upon some slight, trivial, unprojected occasion; no less unperceivable in their rise, than afterwards formidable in their progress. But, as what is said of affliction in

Job v. 6, may with equal truth and pertinence be said of every notable event, bad as well as good, namely, that it "comes not out of the dust;" so the direction of all such small and almost undiscernible causes to such mighty effects as often follow from them, can proceed from nothing but that all-comprehending Providence which casts its superintending eye and governing influence over all, even the most minute and inconsiderable passages in the world; inconsiderable indeed in themselves, but in their consequences by no means so.

And therefore, as we find it expressed of him who kills a man unwillingly, and by some undesigned stroke or accident, that God delivers that man into his hands, *Exod. xxi. 13*, so when a man by such odd, unforeseen ways and means as we have before mentioned, comes to be drawn into any false, erroneous belief or persuasion, it may, with as true and solid consequence, be affirmed, that by all this God sends such a man a delusion. As for instance, when by the special disposal of God's providence, Hushai the Archite suggested that counsel to Absalom, in *2 Sam. xvii. 11, 12*, which he believed and followed to his destruction; we may say, and that neither improperly nor untruly, that God sent him that deception; for it is expressly added in the 14th verse, that "God had appointed to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that he might bring evil upon Absalom." Likewise how emphatically full and pregnant to the same purpose is that instance of a false prophet accustomed to deceive himself and others, *Ezek. xiv. 9*, "If the prophet," says God, "be deceived when he has spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet." God here names and appropriates the action to himself, by a way of proceeding incomprehensible indeed, but unquestionably just.

Let this therefore pass for a third way, by which God delivers over a sinner to error and circumvention. Which point I shall conclude with those exclamatory words of St. Paul, so full of wonder and astonishment, in *Rom. xi. 33*, "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" So many windings and turnings, so many untraceable meanders are there in the providence of God, to carry on the delusion of those sinners who have been first so sedulous and industrious to delude themselves. In all which passages, nevertheless (how unaccountable soever they may be to us), still the delusion is in him alone who embraces it a sin; but in God who sends it, undoubtedly a judgment only, and a very righteous one too. And now in the

4. And last place: we are not to omit another notable way of God's delivering sinners to delusion; which is mentioned in the 9th verse of the chapter from whence our text is taken, namely, his permitting lying wonders to be done before them. A miracle in a large and general sense is no more, but *effectus aliquis manifestus, cujus causa ignoratur*; a manifest effect, of

which the cause is not understood: but in a more restrained and proper sense, it is defined a work or effect evident to sense, and exceeding the force of natural agents. Now, whether such a one can be done to confirm and give credit to a falsehood proposed to men's belief, God lending his power for the trial of men, to see, or rather to let the world see, whether they will be drawn off from the truth or no, may well be disputed; though that place in Deut. xiii. 1, 2, seems shrewdly to make for the affirmative.

But as for that former sort of miracles, which indeed are only strange things causing wonder, and so may proceed from mere natural causes applying *activa passivis*, there is no question but such as these may be done to confirm a false doctrine or assertion. Thus when Pharaoh hardened his heart against the express command and declared will of God, God permitted him to be confirmed in his delusion by the enchantments and lying wonders of the magicians; all which were done only by the power of the devil. Forasmuch as angels, both good and bad, having a full insight into the activity and force of natural causes, by new and strange conjunctions of the active qualities of some, with the passive capacities of others, can produce such wonderful effects as shall generally amaze and astonish poor mortals, whose shorter sight is not able to reach into the causes of them.

The church of Rome has, in this respect, sufficiently declared the little value she has for the old Christian truth, by the new upstart articles she has superadded to it; and, besides this, to confirm one error with another, she further professes a power of doing miracles. So that, laying aside the writings of the apostles, we must, it seems, resolve our faith into legends; and old wives' fables must take place of the histories of the evangelists. And the truth is, if nonsense may pass for miracle, transubstantiation has carried her miracle-working gift far above all the miracles that were ever yet wrought in the world. But as for the many other miraculous feats which she and her sons pretend to and boast of, I shall only say thus much of them; that though I doubt not but most of them are the impudent cheats of daring, designing persons, set a-foot and practised by them to defy God, as well as to delude men; yet it is noways improbable, but that God may suffer the devil to do many of them above what a bare human power is able to do, and that in a judicial and penal way; thereby to fix and rivet both the deceivers and deceived in a belief of those lies and fopperies, which, in opposition to the light of reason and conscience, they had so industriously enslaved their understandings to.

And now, I think, it is of as high concernment to every man, as the salvation of his soul ought to be, to reflect with dread upon these severe and fearful methods of divine justice. We, through an infinite and peculiar mercy, have yet the truth set

before us; the pure, unmixed truth of the gospel, with great light and power held forth to us. But if we shall now obstinately shut our eyes against it, stave it off, and bolt it out of our consciences, and all this from a secret love to some base minion lust or corruption, which that truth would mortify and root out of our hearts; let us remember, that this is the very height of divine vengeance; that those who love a lie should be brought at length to believe it, and (as a natural consequent of both) to perish by it too.

Which God, the great Fountain of truth and Father of lights, of his infinite compassion prevent. To whom be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON XIII.

PART II.

ILL DISPOSED AFFECTIONS BOTH NATURALLY AND PENALLY THE
CAUSE OF DARKNESS AND ERROR IN THE JUDGMENT.

2 THESS. II. 11.

*And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they
should believe a lie.*

WHEN I first made an entrance upon these words, I gathered the full sense and design of them (as I judged) into this one proposition, viz.,

That the not entertaining a sincere love and affection for the duties of religion, naturally, and by the just judgment of God also, disposes men to error and deceptions about the great truths of religion.

Which to me seeming to take in and comprehend the full sense and drift of the words, I then cast what I had to say upon them into these following particulars.

I. To show how the mind of man can believe a lie.

II. To show what it is to receive the love of the truth.

III. To show how the not receiving the love of truth comes to have such a malign influence upon the understanding, as to dispose it to error and delusion.

IV. To show how God can be properly said to send men delusions. And,

V. Since his sending them is here mentioned as a judgment (and a very severe one too), the next thing I propose is to show wherein the extraordinary greatness of it did consist. And

VI. And lastly, to improve the point into some useful consequences and deductions from the whole.

The four first of these I have already despatched in the preceding discourse upon this text and subject; and so shall now proceed to the

V. Which was to show *wherein the extraordinary and distinguishing greatness of this judgment did consist.* For it is certain that the text here accounts and represents it above the ordinary rate of judgments commonly sent by God.

And this, I conceive, will remarkably show itself to such as shall consider it these two ways:

1. Absolutely in itself.

2. In the consequents of it.

Under the first of which two considerations, the peculiar dreadfulness of this judgment will more than sufficiently appear, upon these two accounts: as,

(1.) That it is spiritual; and so directly affects and annoys the prime and most commanding part of man's nature, his soul; that noble copy and resemblance of its Maker, in small indeed, but nevertheless one of the liveliest representations of him that the God of nature ever drew; and that in some of his greatest and most amiable perfections. And if so, can any thing be imagined to come so like a killing blast upon it, as that which shall at once strip it of this glorious image, and stamp the black portraiture of the foulest of beings in the room of it? Besides, since nothing can either please or afflict to any considerable degree, but by a close and intimate application of itself to a subject capable of such impressions, still it must be the spirituality of a judgment, which entering where body and matter cannot, is the only thing that can strike a man in his principal capacity of being miserable; and consequently in that part which enables him (next to the angels themselves) to receive and drink in more of the wrath, as well as love of God, than any other being whatsoever. In a spiritual, uncompounded nature, the capacities of pain and pleasure must needs be equal; though in a corporeal or compounded one, the sense of pain is much acuter, and goes deeper than that of pleasure is ever found to do. Accordingly, as to what concerns the soul or spirit, no doubt, our chief passive, as well as active strengths are lodged in that; though it being an object too near us to be perfectly apprehended by us, we are not able in this life to know distinctly what a spirit is, and what it can bear, and what it cannot. But our great Creator, who exactly knows our frame, and had the first ordering of the whole machine, knows also where and by what a soul or spirit may be most sensibly touched and wounded, better a great deal than we, who are animated and acted by that soul, do or can. And therefore, where he designs the severest strokes of his wrath, we may be sure, that it is this spiritual part of us which must be the great scene where such tragical things are to be acted. So that, if an angry providence should at any time smite a sinner in his nearest temporal concerns, we may, nevertheless, look upon such an infliction, how sharp soever, but as a drop of scalding water lighting upon his hand or foot; but when God fastens the judgment upon the spirit or inner man, it is like scalding lead poured into his bowels, it reaches him in the very centre of life; and where the centre of life is made the centre of misery too, they must needs be commensurate, and a man can no more shake off his misery than he can himself.

Every judgment of God has a force more or less destructive, according to the quality and reception of the thing which it falls

upon. If it seizes the body, which is but of a mortal and frail make, and so, as it were, crumbles away under the pressure, why then the judgment itself expires through the failure of a sufficient subject or recipient, and ceases to be predatory, as having nothing to prey upon. But that which comes out of its Creator's hands immaterial and immortal, endures and continues under the heaviest stroke of his wrath; and so is able to keep pace with the infliction (as I may so express it) both by the largeness of its perception, and the measure of its duration. He who has a soul to suffer in, has' something by which God may take full hold of him, and upon which he may exert his anger to the utmost. Whereas, if he levels the blow at that which is weak and mortal, the very weakness of the thing stricken at will elude the violence of the stroke: as when a sharp, corroding rheum falls upon the lungs, that part being but of a spongy nature, and of no hard substance, little or no pain is caused by the distillation, but the same falling upon a nerve fastened to the jaw, or to a joint (the consistency and firmness of which shall give force to the impression), it presently causes the quickest pain and anguish, and becomes intolerable. A cannon bullet will do terrible execution upon a castle-wall or a rampart, but none at all upon a wool-pack.

The judgments which God inflicts upon men are of several sorts, and intended for several ends, and those very different. Some are only probative, and designed to try and stir up those virtues which before lay dormant in the soul. Some again are preventive, and sent to pull back the unwary sinner from the unperceived snares of death, which he is ignorantly approaching to. And some, in the last place, are of a punitive or vindictive nature, and intended only to recompense or revenge the guilt of past sins; as part of the sinner's payment in hand, and as so many foretastes of death, and earnest of damnation.

Accordingly we are to observe, that the malignity of spiritual judgments consists chiefly in this, that their end, most commonly, is neither trial nor prevention, but vengeance and retribution. They are corrosives, made not to heal, but to consume: and surely, such a one is the judgment of being sealed up under a delusion. Samson, we read, endured many hardships and affronts, and yet sunk under none of them; but when a universal sottishness was fallen upon all his faculties, and God's wonted presence had forsaken him, he presently became, as to all the generous purposes of life and action, a useless and a ruined person.

Whereas, on the other side, suppose that God should visit a man with extreme poverty; yet still, he who is as poor as Job, may be as humble, as patient, and as pious as Job too; and such qualities will be always accounted pearls and treasures, though found upon the vilest dunghill: or, what if God should dash a man's name and reputation, and make him a scorn and a by-word

to all who know him; yet still the shame of the cross was greater, and one may be made the way and passage to a crown, as well as the other? It was so, we are assured, to our great spiritual head; and why may it not, in its proportion, prove the same likewise to his spiritual members? For the conjunction between them is intimate, and the inference natural. Or what, again, if God should think fit to smite a man with sores, sickness, and noisome ulcers in his body? yet even these, as offensive as they are, cannot unqualify a Lazarus for Abraham's bosom. And so for all other sorts of calamities incident to this mortal state; should we ransack all the magazines of God's temporal judgments, not one of them all, nor yet all of them together, can reach a man in that, which alone can render him truly happy or miserable. For though the mountains (as the psalmist expresses it) should be carried into the sea, and the whole world about him should be in a flame, yet still, as Solomon says, "a wise and a good man shall be satisfied from himself:" his happiness is in his own keeping; he has it at home, and therefore need not seek for it abroad. But,

(2.) The greatness of the judgment of being brought under the power of a delusion, consists not only in the spirituality of it, whereby it possesses and perverts the whole soul in all the powers and offices of it, but more particularly, that it blasts a man in that particular, topping perfection of his nature, his understanding: for ignorance and deception are the very bane of the intellect, the disease of the mind, and the utmost dishonour of reason: there being no sort of reproach which a man resents with so keen and so just an indignation, as the charge of folly. The very word *fool* draws blood, and nothing but death is thought an equivalent to the slander: forasmuch as it carries in it an insulting negative upon that which constitutes the person so charged properly a man; every degree of ignorance being so far a recess and degradation from rationality, and consequently from humanity itself. Nor is this any modern fancy or caprice lately taken up, but the constant and unanimous consent of all nations and ages. For what else do we think could make the heathen philosophers so infinitely laborious, and, even to a miracle, industrious in the quest of knowledge? What was it that engrossed their time, and made them think neither day nor night, nor both of them together, sufficient for study? But because they reckoned it a base and a mean thing to be deceived, to be put off with fallacy and appearance instead of truth and reality, and overlooking the substance and inside of things, to take up with mere shadow and surface. It was a known saying of the ancients, Ἀπὸ σώματος νόσον, ἀπὸ ψυχῆς ἀμάρτιαν. Keep off ignorance from thy soul, as thou wouldest a disease or a plague from thy body. For when a man is cursed with a blind and a besotted mind, it is a sure, and therefore a sad sign, that God is leading such a one to his final doom; it is both the cause and the forerunner of his destruction.

For when the malefactor comes once to have his eyes covered, it shows that he is not far from his execution. In a word, he who has sunk so far below himself, as to have debased the governing faculties of his soul, and given up his assent to an imperious, domineering error, is fit for nothing but to be trumped and trampled upon, to be led by the nose, and enslaved to the designs of every bold encroacher, either upon his interest or his reason. And such, he may be sure, he shall not fail to meet with; especially if his lot casts him upon a country abounding with public, countenanced, religious cheats, both natives and foreigners, broachers of heresies, leaders of sects, tools and under-agents to our Romish back-friends, who can willingly enough allow them all conventicles for the only proper places to serve God in, and the church (if need be) to serve a turn by; of which and the like impostors, it may be truly said with reference to their abused proselytes, that they wear and carry the trophies of so many captivated reasons about them; that they clothe themselves with the spoil of their wretched intellectuals, and so, in effect, tread the very heads of their disciples under their feet. This is the treatment which they are sure to find from such sanctified deceivers; these the returns, which delusion, submitted to, still rewards her votaries with. And may God, I beseech him, in his just judgment, order matters so, that such practices and such rewards may inseparably accompany and join one another, not only by an occasional, but by a fixed and perpetual communion.

In the mean time, if slavery be that which all generous and brave spirits abhor; and to lose the choicest of nature's freeholds, and that in the most valuable of things, their reason, be the worst of slaveries; then surely it must be the most inglorious condition that can befall a rational creature, to be possessed, rid, and governed by a delusion. For still, as our Saviour has told us in John viii. 32, "it is the truth which makes us free:" the truth only, which must give a man the enjoyment, the government, and the very possession of himself. In a word, truth has set up her tribunal in the soul, and sitting there as judge herself, there can be no exception against her sentence, nor appeal from her authority.

But besides all this, there is yet something further, which adds to the misery of this kind of slavery and captivity of the mind under error; and that is, that it has a peculiar malignity to bind the shackles faster upon it, by a strange, unaccountable love, which it begets of itself, in a man's affections. For no man entertains an error, but, for the time that he does so, he is highly pleased and enamoured with it, and has a more particular tenderness and fondness for a false notion, than for a true (as some for a bastard, more than for a son); for error and deception by all, who are not actually under them, are accounted really the madness of the mind. And madness, it must be owned, naturally

keeps off melancholy, though often caused by it. For it makes men wonderfully pleased with their own extravagancies; and few, how much soever out of their wits, are out of humour too in Bedlam.

Now the reason of this different acceptableness of truth and error in the first offers of them to the mind, and the advantage which the latter too often gets over the former, is, I conceive, from this, that it is natural for error to paint and daub, to trim, and use more of art and dress to set it off to the mind, than truth is observed to do. Which, trusting in its own native and substantial worth, scorns all meretricious ornaments, and knowing the right it has to our assent, and the indisputable claim to all that is called reason, she thinks it below her to ask that upon courtesy, in which she can plead a property; and therefore, rather enters than insinuates, and challenges possession instead of begging admission. Which being the case, no wonder if error oiled with obsequiousness (which generally gains friends, though it deserves none worth having), has often the advantage of truth, and thereby slides more easily and intimately into the fool's bosom, than the uncourtliness of truth will suffer it to do. But then again, we are to observe withal, that there is nothing which the mind of man has a vehement and passionate love for, but it is so far enslaved and brought into bondage to that thing. And if so, can there be a greater calamity, than for so noble a being as the soul is, to love and court the dictates of a commanding absurdity? Nothing certainly being so tyrannical as ignorance, where time and long possession enables it to prescribe; nor so haughty and assuming, where pride and self-conceit bids it set up for infallible.

But now, to close this point, by showing how vastly the understanding differs from itself, when informed by truth, and when abused by error: let us observe, how the scripture words the case, while it expresses the former by a state of light, and the latter by a state of darkness. Concerning both which, as it is evident that nothing can be more amiable, suitable, and universally subservient both to the needs and to the refreshments of the creature, than light: so nothing is deservedly accounted so dismal, hateful, and dispiriting, as darkness is; darkness, I say, which the scripture makes only another word for the shadow of death; and always the grand opportunity of mischief, and the surest shelter of deformity. For though to want eyes be indeed a great calamity, yet to have eyes and not to see, to have all the instruments of sight, and the curse of blindness together, this is the very height and crisis of misery, and adds a sting and a reproach to what would otherwise be but a misfortune. For nothing envenoms any calamity, but the crime which deserves it.

I come now to consider the distinguishing greatness of the judgment of God's sending men strong delusion, by taking a

view of the effects and consequents of it; and we need cast our eyes no further than these two. As,

1. That it renders the conscience utterly useless, as to the great office to be discharged by it in the regulation and supervisal of the whole course of a man's life. A blind watchman (all must grant) is equally a nuisance and an impertinence. And such a paradox, both in reason and practice, is a deluded conscience, viz. a counsellor who cannot advise, and a guide not able to direct. Nothing can be more close and proper to the point now before us, than that remark of our Saviour, in Matt. vi. 23, "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great must that darkness be!" Why, as great no doubt, and of as fatal consequence to the affairs and government of the microcosm, or lesser world, as if in the greater, God should put out the sun, and establish one great, universal cloud in the room of it; or as if the moon and stars, instead of governing the night, should be governed by it, and the noble influences of the one should, for usefulness, give place to the damps and deadening shades of the other. All which would quickly be granted to be monstrous and preposterous things; and yet not more so, than to imagine a man guided by a benighted conscience in the great concerns of eternity; and to have that put out, which God had set up as the sovereign light of the soul, to sit and preside there as the great pilot to steer us in all our choices, and to afford us those standing discriminations of good and evil, by which alone a rational agent can proceed warrantably and safely in all his actions.

As for the will and the affections, they are made to follow and obey, not to lead or to direct. Their office is not apprehension, but appetite; and therefore the schools rightly affirm, that the will, strictly and precisely considered, is *cæca potentia*, a blind faculty. And therefore, if error has perverted the order and disturbed the original economy of our faculties; and a blind will thereupon comes to be led by a blind understanding, there is no remedy, but it must trip and stumble, and sometimes fall into the noisome ditch of the foulest enormities and immoralities. But now, whether this be not one of the highest instances of God's vindictive justice, thus to confound a man with an erroneous, deceived conscience, a little reflection upon the miseries of one in such a condition will easily demonstrate. For see the tumult and anarchy of his mind; having done a good and a lawful action, his conscience alarms him with scruples, with false judgments, and anxious reflections; and, perhaps on the other hand, having done an act in itself vile and unlawful, the same conscience excuses and acquits him, and soothes him into such complacencies in his sin, as shall prevent his repentance, and so ascertain his perdition. But now, what shall a deluded person do in this sad dilemma of sin and misery? For "if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who can prepare himself for the battle?"

If it sounds a charge, when it should sound a retreat, how can the soldier direct his course? But being thus befooled by the very methods and means of safety, must of necessity find himself in the jaws of death before he is aware, and betrayed into his enemy's hands, without any possibility of help or relief from his own. In like manner, where a delusion enters so deep into, and gets such fast hold of the conscience, that it corrupts or jostles out the first marks and measures of lawful and unlawful, and thereby overthrows the standing rules of morality; a man in such a woful and dark estate, can hardly be accounted in the number of rational agents: for, if he does well it is by chance, neither by rule nor principle; nor by choice, but by luck; and if, on the contrary, he does ill, yet he is not assured that he does so, being acted, in all that he goes about, by a blind impetus, without either forecast or distinction. Both the good and evil of his actions is brutish and accidental, and in the whole course of them he proceeds as if he were throwing dice for his life, or at cross and pile for his salvation. And this brings me to the other killing consequence, wherein appears the greatness of this judgment of being delivered over to a delusion. And that is,

2. Final perdition, mentioned by the apostle in the verse immediately following the text. "God," says he, "shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth." This is the utmost period to which delusion brings the sinner, but no less than what was intended by it from the very first. Every error is in the nature of it destructive. I do not say that it always actually destroys; since the tendency of an action is one thing, but the event another. For as in the body there is hardly any sore or distemper (how curable soever by art or physic) but what in the malignity of its nature, and the utmost improvement of that malignity, tends to the ruin and demolition of the whole constitution: so in the soul there is no considerable error, which at any time infects it (especially if it disposes to practice), but being suffered to continue and exert its progressive and diffusive quality, will be still spreading its contagion, and by degrees eating into the conscience, till it festers into a kind of spiritual gangrene, and becomes mortal and incurable.

I must confess, I cannot imagine that those heretics who err fundamentally, and by consequence damnably, took their first rise, and began to set up with a fundamental error, but grew into it by insensible encroachments and gradual insinuations, inuring, and, as it were, training up the belief to lesser essays of falsehoods, and proceeding from propositions only suspicious, to such as were false, from false to dangerous, and at length from dangerous to downright destructive. Hell is a deep place, and there are many steps of descent to the bottom of it: many obscure vaults to be passed through, before we come to utter darkness. But

still the way of error is the way to it. And as surely and naturally as the first dusk and gloom of the evening tends to, and at last ends in the thickest darkness of midnight, so every delusion, sinfully cherished and persisted in (how easily soever it may sit upon the conscience for some time) will, in the issue, lodge the sinner in the deepest hell, and the blackest regions of damnation. And so I come to the

VI. And last thing proposed from the handling of the words: and that was, to *draw some useful consequences and deductions* from the five foregoing particulars. As,

First of all: since the belief of a lie is here undoubtedly noted for a sin; and since almighty God in the way of judgment delivers men to it for "not receiving the love of the truth;" it follows, by most clear and undeniable consequence, that it is no ways inconsistent with the divine holiness to affirm, that he may punish one sin with another. Though the manner, how God does so, is not so generally agreed upon by all. For some here affirm, that sin is said to be the punishment of sin, because in most sinful actions, the committer of them is really a sufferer in and by the very sin which he commits. As for instance, the envious man at the same time contracts the guilt and feels the torment of his sin; the same thing defiles and afflicts too; merits a hell hereafter, and withal anticipates one here. The like may be said of theft, perjury, uncleanness, and intemperance; the infamy, and other calamities inseparably attending them, render them their own scourges, and make the sinner the minister of God's justice in acting a full revenge upon himself. All this, I must confess, is true, but it reaches not the matter in question; which compares not the same sin with itself, whereof the consequences may undoubtedly be afflictive, but compares two distinct sins together, and inquires concerning these, whether one can properly be the punishment of the other?

Besides, if we weigh and distinguish things exactly, when the envious man groans under the gnawings and convulsions of his base sin, and the lewd person suffers the brand and disrepute of his vice; in all this, sin is not properly punished with sin; but the evil of envy is punished with the trouble of envy, and the sin of intemperance with the infamy of intemperance; but neither is a state of trouble nor a state of disgrace or infamy properly a state of sin; these are natural, not moral evils; and opposed to the quiet and tranquillity, not to the virtue of the soul; for man may be virtuous without either ease or reputation. This way therefore is short of resolving the problem inquired into; which precisely moves upon this point, viz. Whether for the guilt of one sin God can, by way of penalty, bring the sinner under the guilt of another?

Some seem to prove that he cannot, and that in the strength

of this argument, that every punishment proceeding from God as the author of it, is just and good; but no sin is or can be so; and therefore no sin can be made by God the punishment of another.

But nevertheless, the contrary is held forth in scripture, and that as expressly as words can well declare a thing; for besides the clear proof thereof, which the very text carries with it, it is yet further proved by those two irrefragable places, in Rom. i. 24. The apostle has these very words, "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness;" and again in the 26th verse, "For this cause God gave them up to vile affections." Besides several other places pregnant to the same purpose, both in the Old Testament and the New. From all which it is certain, that God may make one sin the punishment of another. Though still it is to be remembered, that it is one thing for God to give a man over to sin, and quite another for God to cause him to sin; the former importing in it no more than God's providential ordering of a man's circumstances, so that he shall find no check or hinderance in the course of his sin; but the latter implying also a positive efficacy towards the commission or production of a sinful act; which God never does nor can do; but the other he both may, and, in a judicial way, very often does.

To the argument therefore alleged, I answer thus: That it is very consonant both to scripture and reason, to distinguish in one and the same thing several respects; and accordingly in sin, we may consider the moral irregularity of it; and so being in the very nature of it evil, it is impossible that there should be any good in it; or we may consider sin, as to the penal application of it to the person who committed it, and as a means to bring the just judgment of God upon him for what he had done; and so some good may be said to belong to it, though there be none at all in it.

Or to express the same thing otherwise, and perhaps more clearly and agreeably to vulgar apprehensions. Sin may be considered either, 1. With reference to the proper cause of it, the will of man committing or producing it, and so it is absolutely and entirely evil. Or, 2. It may be considered as it relates to the supreme judge and governor of the world, permitting, ordering, disposing, and overruling the existence and event of it, to the honour of his wisdom and justice; and so far it may be called good, and consequently sustain the nature of a punishment proceeding from God. But you will reply, Can sin be any ways good? I answer, that naturally and intrinsically it cannot, but extrinsically, accidentally, and occasionally, as ordered to a subserviency to God's glory, it may; and the providence of God is no further concerned about it: that is to say, it is good and just, that God should so order and dispose of an obstinate sinner, as he did once of Pharaoh that he should, through his own corrup-

tion, fall into further sin, in order to his further punishment: but surely, this does by no means infer, that the sins he thus falls into are good, though God's ordering of them may be so; and darkness will be darkness still, though God can and often does bring light out of it. That the Jews having rejected the gospel so powerfully preached to them, should be delivered to hardness of heart and final impenitence, was just, and, by consequence, good. But this is far from inferring, that the hardness of heart and impenitence were so too. Sin may give occasion for a great deal of good to be exercised upon it and about it, though there be none inherent in it; and upon that account, when any good is ascribed to it, or affirmed of it, it is purely by an extrinsic denomination, and no more.

Now these distinctions rightly weighed and applied, will fully and clearly accord the doctrine laid down by us, both with the notions of human reason, and the holiness of the divine nature; and consequently render all objections and popular exclamations against either of them empty and insignificant.

Nor indeed is it very difficult, and much less impossible, to give some tolerable account, how God delivers a sinner over to further sins. For it may be very rationally said, that he does it partly by withholding his restraining grace, and leaving corrupt nature to itself, to the full swing and freedom of its own extravagant actings: whereby a man adds sin to sin, strikes out furiously, and without control, till he grows obstinate and incurable. And God may be said to do the same also by administering objects and occasions of sin to such or such a sinner, whose corrupt nature will be sure to take fire at them, and so actually to throw itself into all enormities. In all which, God is not at all the author of sin, but only pursues the great works and righteous ends of his providence, in disposing of things or objects in themselves good or indifferent towards the compassing of the same; howbeit, through the poison of men's vicious affections, they are turned into the opportunities and fuel of sin, and made the occasion of their final destruction.

But now of all the punishments which the great and just God in his anger inflicts, or brings upon a man for sin, there is none comparable to sin itself. Men are apt to go on securely, pleasing themselves in the repeated gratifications of their vice; and they feel not God strike, and so are encouraged in the progress of their impiety. But let them not, for all that, be too confident; for God may strike, though they feel not his stroke, and perhaps the more terribly for their not feeling it. Forasmuch as in judgments of this nature, insensibility always goes deepest; and the wrath of God seldom does such killing execution, when it thunders, as when it blasts. He has certainly some dreadful design carrying on against the sinner, while he suffers him to go on in a smooth uninterrupted course of sinning, and what that design is,

and the dreadfulness of it, probably will not be known to him till the possibilities of repentance are cut off, and hid from his eyes; at present, it looks like the suffering a man to perish and die by a lethargy, rather than jog or awaken him. Believe it, it is a sad case, when the sinner shall never perceive that God is angry with him, till he actually feels the effects of his anger in another world, where it can neither be pacified nor turned away.

2. The second great consequence from the doctrine hitherto treated of by us, of the naturalness of men's going off from the love of the truth to a disbelief of the same, shall be to inform us of the surest and most effectual way to confirm our faith about the sacred and important truths of religion? and that is, to love them for their transcendent worth and purity; to fix our inclinations and affections upon them; and in a word, not only to confess, own, and acknowledge them to be truths, but also to be willing that they should be so; and to rejoice with the greatest complacency, that there should be such things prepared for us, as the scripture tells us there are. For we shall find that truth is not so much upon terms of courtesy with the understanding (which upon a clear discovery of itself, it naturally commands), as it is with the will and the affections, which, though never so clearly discovered to them, it is almost always forced to woo, and make suit to.

I have been ever prone to take this for a principle, and a very safe one too, viz. that there is no opinion really good (I mean good in the natural, beneficent consequences thereof) which can be false. And accordingly, when religion, even natural, tells us that there is a God, and that he is a rewarder of every man according to his works; that he is a most wise governor, and a most just and impartial judge, and for that reason has appointed a future estate, wherein every man shall receive a retribution suitable to what he had done in his lifetime. And moreover, when the Christian religion further assures us, that Christ has satisfied God's justice for sin, and purchased eternal redemption and salvation for even the greatest sinners, who shall repent of and turn from their sins; and withal has given such excellent laws to the world, that if men perform them they shall not fail to reap an eternal reward of happiness, as the fruit and effect of the forementioned satisfaction; as on the other side, that if they live viciously and die impenitent, they shall inevitably be disposed of into a condition of eternal and insupportable misery. These, I say, are some of the principal things which religion, both natural and Christian, proposes to mankind.

And now, before we come to acknowledge the truth of them, let us seriously and in good earnest examine them, and consider how good, how expedient, and how suitably to all the ends and uses of human life it is, that there should be such things; how unable society would be to subsist without them; how the whole

world would sink into another chaos and confusion, did not the awe and belief of these things (or something like them) regulate and control the exorbitances of men's headstrong and unruly wills. Upon a thorough consideration of all which, I am confident that there is no truly wise and thinking person, who (could he suppose that the forecited dictates of religion should not prove really true) would not however wish at least that they were so. For allowing (what experience too sadly demonstrates) that a universal guilt has passed upon all mankind through sin; and supposing withal, that there were no hopes or terms of pardon held forth to sinners; would not a universal despair follow a universal guilt? And would not such a despair drive the worship of God out of the world? For certain it is, that none would pray to him, serve or worship him, and much less suffer for him, who despaired to receive any good from him. And on the other side, could sinners have any solid ground to hope for pardon of sin, without an antecedent satisfaction made to the divine justice so infinitely wronged by sin? Or could the honour of that great attribute be preserved without such a compensation? And yet further, could all the wit and reason of man conceive, how such a satisfaction could be made, had not religion revealed to us a Saviour, who was both God and man, and upon that account only fitted and enabled to make it? And after all, could the benefits of this satisfaction be attainable by any, but upon the conditions of repentance and change of life; would not all piety and holy living be thereby banished from the societies of men? So that we see from hence, that it is religion alone which opposes itself to all the dire consequences, and (like the angel appointed to guard paradise with a flaming sword) stands in the breach against all that despair, violence, and impiety, which would otherwise irresistibly break in upon and infest mankind in all their concerns, civil and spiritual.

And this one consideration (were there no further arguments for it, either from faith or philosophy) is to me an irrefragable proof of the truth of the doctrines delivered by it. For, that a falsehood (which, as such, is the defect, the reproach, and the very deformity of nature) should have such generous, such wholesome, and sovereign effects, as to keep the whole world in order; and that a lie should be the great bond or ligament which holds all the societies of mankind together; keeping them from cutting throats and tearing one another in pieces (if religion be not a truth, all these salutary, public benefits must be ascribed to tricks and lies); would be such an assertion, as, upon all the solid grounds of sense and reason (to go no further), ought to be looked upon as unmeasurably absurd and unnatural.

But our Saviour prescribes men an excellent and unfailing method to assure themselves of the truth of his doctrine. John vii. 17, "If any one," says he, "will do the will of the

Father, he shall know of my doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." If men could but be brought to look upon the *agenda* of Christianity as suitable, they would never judge the *credenda* of it irrational. There is a strange intercourse and mutual corroboration between faith and practice. For as belief first engages practice, so practice strengthens and confirms belief. The body first imparts heat to the garment, but the garment returns it with advantage to the body. God beams in peculiar evidences and discoveries of the truth, to such as embrace it in their affections, and own it in their actions. There may be, indeed, some plausible, seeming arguments brought against the truth to assault and shake our belief of it: but they generally prevail, not by their own strength, but by our corruption; not by their power to persuade, but by our willingness to be deceived. Whereas, on the contrary, true piety would effectually solve such scruples, and obedience answer all objections. And so I descend now to the

3. And last of the consequences deducible from the doctrine first proposed by us: and this shall be to give some account of the true cause and original of those two great evils, which of late have so disturbed these parts of the world; to wit, atheism and fanaticism. And,

(1.) For atheism. Most sure it is, that no doctrine or opinion can generally gain upon men's minds, but (let it be never so silly and fantastical) it must yet proceed from some real cause; and more particularly, either from the seeming evidence of the thing forcing a belief of itself upon a weak intellect, or from some strange, unaccountable inclination of the will and affections to such an hypothesis. For the first of these I would fain see some of those cogent, convincing arguments, by which any one will own himself persuaded that there is no God, or that he does not govern the affairs of the world so as to take a particular cognizance of men's actions, in designing to them a future retribution, according to the nature and quality of them here. It being all one to the world, whether there be no God, or none who governs it.

But how pitiful and ridiculous are the grounds upon which such men pretend to account for the very lowest and commonest phenomena of nature, without recurring to a God and Providence! Such, as, either the fortuitous concourse of infinite little bodies of themselves, and by their own impulse (since no other nature or spirit is allowed by these men to put them into motion) falling into this curious and admirable system of the universe. According to which notion, the blindest chance must be acknowledged to surpass and outdo the contrivances of the exactest art: a thing which the common sense and notion of mankind must, at the very first hearing, rise up against and explode. But if this romance will not satisfy, then in comes the eternity of the world,

the chief and most avowed opinion set up by the atheists, to confront and answer all the objections from religion; and yet after all these high pretences, so great and inextricable are the plunges and absurdities which these principles cast men into, that the belief of a being distinct from the world, and before it, is not only towards a good life more conducive, but even for the resolution of these problems more philosophical. And I do accordingly here leave that old, trite, common argument (though nevertheless venerable for being so), drawn from a constant series or chain of causes, leading us up to a supreme mover (not moved himself by any thing but himself), a being simple, immaterial, and incorporeal: I leave this, I say, to our high and mighty atheists to baffle and confute it, and substitute something more rational in the room of it, if they can; and in order thereunto, to take an eternity to do it in.

But if this be the case, why then is it made a badge of wit, and an argument of parts, for a man to commence atheist, and to cast off all belief of providence, all awe and reverence of religion? Assuredly in this matter, men's conviction begins not at their understandings, but at their wills, or rather at their brutish appetites; which being immersed in the pleasures and sensualities of the world, would by no means, if they could help it, have such a thing as a Deity, or a future estate of souls to trouble them here, or to account with them hereafter. No; such men, we may be sure, dare not look such truths as these in the face, and therefore they throw them off, and had rather be befooled into a friendly, favourable, and propitious lie; a lie which shall chuck them under the chin, and kiss them, and at the same time strike them under the fifth rib. To believe that there is no God to judge the world, is hugely suitable to that man's interest, who assuredly knows that upon such a judgment he shall be condemned; and to assert that there is no hell, must needs be a very benign opinion to a person engaged in such actions as he knows must certainly bring him thither. Men are atheists, not because they have better wits than other men, but because they have corrupter wills; not because they reason better, but because they live worse.

(2.) The next great evil, which has of late infested the Christian church, and that part of it in our nation more especially, is fanaticism; that is to say, a pretence to, and profession of, a greater purity in religion, and a more spiritual, perfect way of worshipping almighty God, than the national established church affords to those in communion with it. This, I say, was and is the pretence; but a pretence so utterly false, and shamefully groundless, that, in comparison of the principle which makes it, hypocrisy may worthily pass for sincerity, and Pharisaism for the truest and most refined Christianity.

But as for those who own and abet such separations, to the

infinite disturbance both of church and state, I would fain have them produce those mighty reasons, those invincible arguments which have drawn them from the communion of the church into conventicles, and warranted them to prefer schisms and divisions before Christian unity and conformity. No; this is a thing which we may expect long enough, before they will so much as offer at, and much less perform; there being but little of argument to be expected from men professing nothing but inspiration, and the impulse of a principle discernible by none but by themselves. And, for my own part, I must sincerely declare, that, upon the strictest search I have been able to make, I could never yet find that these men had any other reason or argument to defend themselves and their practices by, but that senseless and impolitic encouragement which has been all along given them. But for all that, men who act by conscience, as well as pretend it, will do well to consider, that in human laws and actions it is not the penalty annexed which makes the sin, nor, consequently, the withdrawing it which takes away the guilt; but that the sanctions of men, as well as the providence of God, may suffer, and even serve to countenance, many things in this world, which shall both certainly and severely too be reckoned for in the next.

In the mean time, to give a true but short account of the proceedings and temper of these separatists. It was nothing but a kind of spiritual pride which first made them disdain to submit to the discipline, and from thence brought them to despise and turn their backs upon the established worship of our church; the sober, grave, and primitive plainness of which began to be loathed by such brainsick, fanciful opiniators, who could please themselves in nothing but novelty, and the ostentation of their own extemporary, senseless effusions; fit to proceed from none but such as have the gift of talking in their sleep, or dreaming while they are awake.

And for this cause, no doubt, God in his just and severe judgment delivered them over to their own sanctified and adored nonsense, to confound and lose themselves in an endless maze of error and seduction: so that as soon as they had broken off from the church, through the encouragement given them by a company of men which had overturned all that was settled in the nation, they first ran into presbyterian classes, from thence into independent congregations. From independents they improved into anabaptists. From anabaptists into quakers. From whence, being able to advance no further, they are in a fair way to wheel about to the other extreme of popery: a religion and interest the most loudly decried, and most effectually served by these men, of any other in the world besides.

But whosoever, in the great concerns of his soul, would pitch his foot upon sure ground, let him beware of these whirlpools, and of turning round and round, till he comes to be seized with such a

giddiness, as shall make him fall finally and irrecoverably, not from the church only, but even from God himself, and all sense of religion. And, therefore, to prevent such a fatal issue of things, let a man in the next place consider, that the way to obtain a settled persuasion of the truth of religion, is to bring an honest, humble, and unbiassed mind, open to the embraces of it; and to know withal, that if he chooses the truth in simplicity, God will confirm his choice with certainty and stability.

To which God, the Father of lights and the Fountain of all truth, be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON XIV.

PART I.

COVETOUSNESS PROVED NO LESS AN ABSURDITY IN REASON, THAN A CONTRADICTION TO RELIGION, NOR A MORE UNSURE WAY TO RICHES, THAN RICHES THEMSELVES TO HAPPINESS.

LUKE XII. 15.

And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

IN these words our Saviour cautions his disciples, and the rest of his hearers, against covetousness: a vice which by striking in with some of the most active principles of our nature, and at the same time perverting them too, has ever yet been, and will no doubt ever be, too hard for all the rules and arguments brought against it from bare morality. So that, as a grammarian once answered his prince, offering to enter into a dispute with him upon a grammatical point, "that he would by no means dispute with one who had many legions at his command;" so as little success is like to be found in managing a dispute against covetousness, which sways and carries all before it, in the strength of that great queen regent of the world, money; the absolute commandress of fleets and armies, and, which is more, very often of their commanders too. So hard has common experience found it for some to draw their swords heartily, even against an enemy, who has first drawn his purse to them; such a universal influence has this mighty vice: a vice which, by a kind of amphibious quality, is equally strong by sea and land, and consequently never out of its element, whatsoever place, station, or condition it may be in. From which, and too many the like instances, it will, I fear, prove but too evident, that let philosophers argue, and rhetoricians declaim never so much against this always decried, but yet always practised vice, covetousness will hardly ever lose its reputation and credit in men's minds (whatsoever it may in their mouths) so long as there shall be such a thing in the world as money, to hold them fast by.

The words contain in them these two general parts:

First, A dehoration or dissuasive from covetousness: "Take heed, and beware of covetousness."

Secondly, A reason enforcing it, and coupling the latter part of the text with the former, by the causal particle *for*; "*for* a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

If we take the whole complex of the dehortation and the reason of it together, as they are joined in the text, we shall find that they are intended as an answer to a tacit argumentation apt to be formed by the minds of men, in the behalf of covetousness, and founded upon these three principles:

1. That it is natural, (and, I may add also, allowable,) for every man to endeavour to make his condition in this life as happy as lawfully he can.

2. That to abound with the good things of this world seems the direct and ready way to procure this happiness. And,

3. That covetousness is the proper and effectual means to acquire to a man this abundance.

Upon these three principles, I say, is built that plea or discourse, with which the heart of every worldling upon the face of the earth endeavours to satisfy himself of the reasonableness of covetousness. It being impossible, without some pretence or reason, for a rational agent to maintain a quiet mind in any ill course or practice whatsoever: no man ever doing any thing, which, at the time of his doing it, he does not actually judge that he has reason to do the same, whether that judgment be right or wrong, true or false. And therefore, since our Saviour, in the text we are upon, first supposes, and then sets himself to confute this plea, by overthrowing some of those sophistical or sophistically applied principles, upon which it leaned, the particular knowledge of them was regularly to be premised by us, as the basis and groundwork of the whole prosecution of the subject now before us. In which we shall begin with the first general part of the text, to wit, the dehortation itself; and so confining our discourse wholly to this at present, we will consider in it these three following particulars:

I. The author of this dehortation, who was Christ himself; the great instructor, as well as Saviour of the world.

II. The thing he dehorts us from: to wit, the meanest and most sordid of all vices, covetousness. And,

III. And lastly, The way prescribed by him, as the most sovereign and effectual preservative from it; to wit, a constant guard and a watchful eye over it. "Take heed," says he, "and beware of it;" the present danger and the consequent mischief making the utmost caution against it no more than sufficient.

All which particulars put together, viz., the quality of the person dehorting us, the nature of the thing he dehorts us from, and the certainty of the remedy he advises us to, make it disputable, whether we are to take the words of the text as the absolute command of a legislator, or the endearing counsel of a

friend: I think we have great reason to account them both, and that the text will sufficiently justify the assigning a double ground of the precept, where the doubling of that must needs also double our obligation to the practice; while, as a counsel, we ought to follow it; and as a command, we are bound to obey it.

To proceed therefore upon the forementioned particulars; we shall treat of each of them in their order. And,

I. For the great *author of the dehoration* or dissuasion here set down, who was Christ himself: "He said unto them, Beware of covetousness." That is, *he* emphatically, *he* with a peculiar significance. For in all persuasions to, or dissuasions from any thing, the arguments enforcing both must be either founded upon the authority of the person proposing them, or the reason and evidence of the thing proposed. As to the first of which, can any thing in nature be imagined more convincing, than the assertion or word of one whose infinite knowledge makes it impossible for him to be deceived, and whose infinite goodness makes it equally impossible for him to deceive? The first of which must be abundantly sufficient to oblige our belief, and the other to claim our obedience. But both of them inseparably accompanied the words of our Saviour; who, as the evangelist tells us, "speaking as one having authority," and (by the very testimony of his enemies) "as none ever spoke before him," could not sink below this high character, in his discourses upon any occasion or subject whatsoever; but upon none more eminently did he or could he show it, than upon this of covetousness; where nothing but the superlative abilities of the speaker could reach the compass of the subject spoken to; nor any thing, but the unblemished virtue of the reprover, put the thing reprov'd out of countenance, or all defence of itself imaginable. For it is innocence which enables eloquence to reprove with power; and guilt attacked flies before the face of him who has none. And therefore, as every rebuke of vice comes or should come from the preacher's mouth, like a dart or arrow thrown by some mighty hand, which does execution proportionably to the force or impulse it received from that which threw it; so our Saviour's matchless virtue, free from the least tincture of any thing immoral, armed every one of his reproofs with a piercing edge and an irresistible force: so that truth, in that respect, never came naked out of his mouth, but either clothed with thunder, or wrapped up in all the powers of persuasion; still his person animated and gave life and vigour to his expression; all his commands being but the transcript of his own life, and his sermons a living paraphrase upon his practice; thus, by the strongest way of argumentation, confuting and living down covetousness long before he preached against it. For though it is most true, that, in hearing the word, men should consider only the nature of the matter delivered to them (which,

if it contains a duty, will be sure to make good its hold upon them, be the quality of him who delivers it what it will); yet since also the nature of man is such, that in all addresses to him, the person himself will be still as much considered as his discourse, and perhaps more: and since the circumstances of his condition will always have a mighty, determining influence upon the credibility of his words, we will consider our Saviour discoursing against covetousness under these two qualifications:

1. As he was Lord of the universe. And,
2. As he was depressed to the lowest estate of poverty.

By the former of which, he possessed "the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" by the latter, he humbled, and (according to the apostle's phrase) even emptied himself to the abject estate of a servant. He who was the first-born of the Almighty, and so, by the title of primogeniture, heir of all things, and, by consequence, had a universal, unlimited claim to all that was great or glorious within the whole compass of nature, yet had so little of this claim in possession, that he tells us, he was in a poorer and more forlorn condition than the very foxes of the field, or the fowls of the air, as to the common accommodations of life. It was a saying in the Jewish church, and received with a universal reverence, both by the learned and unlearned, that the world was made for the Messias. And we Christians hold, that it was made by him too. For he was (as the prophet Isaiah styles him) "the mighty God," and consequently the Creator of all that was not God. The son of Abraham by one nature, and eternally before Abraham by another. And yet this wonderful almighty Person, whom the world could not circumscribe, by reason of the divinity and immensity of his being, had not so much in the same world as "where to lay his head," by reason of the meanness of his condition. From all which it follows, that since the quality of the person persuading makes one great part or ingredient in the persuasion, nothing could come more invincibly, by way of argument, against covetousness, than a discourse against it from the mouth of him who created, governed, and had a rightful title to all things, and yet possessed nothing. And thus much for the first thing to be considered in the dehortation; namely, the person dehorting, who was Christ himself. Pass we now to the

II. Thing to be considered in it, to wit, *the thing we are dehorted from*, which is covetousness. And here, one would think, it might well be supposed, that there needed no great pains to explain what this is, if we may rationally conclude, that men know the things they practise, or, in other words, understand what they do; yet since the very nearness of the object, sometimes hinders the sight of it, and nothing is more usual than for men to be most of all strangers at home, and to overlook the

darling sin lying in their own bosoms, where they think they can never sufficiently hide it (especially from themselves), I shall endeavour to give some account of the nature of this vice. And that,

1. Negatively, by showing what it is not. And,

2. Positively, by declaring what it is, and wherein it does consist; for there is often a fallacy on both sides. And,

1. For the negative. Covetousness is not that prudent forecast, parsimony, and exactness, by which men bound their expenses according to the proportion of their fortunes. When the river is shallow, surely it is concerned to keep within its own banks. No man is bound to make himself a beggar, that fools or flatterers may account him generous; nor to spend his estate to gratify the humour of such as are like to be the first who shall despise and slight him when it is spent. If God bestows upon us a blessing, we may be confident that he looks upon it as worth our keeping. And he only values the good providence of God for giving him an estate, who uses some providence himself in the management of it; and by so doing puts it into his power to relieve the poverty of the distressed, and to recover a sinking friend, when the circumstances of things shall stamp his liberality with the name of charity and religion. For indeed, he only is in a true sense charitable, who can sacrifice that to duty, which otherwise he knows well enough both how to prize and make use of himself; and he alone can be said to love his friend really, who can make his own convenience bow to his friend's necessity, and thereby shows that he values his friendship more than any thing that his friend can receive from him. But he, who with a promiscuous undistinguishing profuseness does not so much dispense as throw away what he has, proclaims himself a fool to all the intelligent world about him: and is utterly ignorant, both of what he has and what he does; till at length, having emptied himself of all, he comes to have his purse and his head both alike.

We never find the scripture commending any prodigal but one, and him too only for his ceasing to be so. Whose courses if we reflect upon, we shall see his prodigality bringing him from his revelling companions and his riotous meats, to the swine and to the trough; and from imitating their sensuality, by a natural consequence to take up with their diet too. Prodigality is the devil's steward and purse-bearer, ministering to all sorts of vice; and it is hard, if not impossible, for a prodigal person to be guilty of no other vice but prodigality. For men generally are prodigal because they are first intemperate, luxurious, or ambitious. And these, we know, are vices too brave and costly to be kept and maintained at an easy rate; they must have large pensions, and to be fed with both hands, though the man who feeds them starves for his pains. From whence it is evident, that that which only retrenches and cuts off the supplies of these gaping, boundless appetites, is so far from deserving the

ugly name of avarice, that it is a noble instrument of virtue, a step to grace, and a great preparation of nature for religion. In a word, so far as parsimony is a part of prudence, it can be no part of covetousness.

And thus having shown negatively what the covetousness here condemned by our Saviour is not: let us now show positively, what it is, and wherein it does consist. And we shall find that it consists in these following things:

(1.) An anxious, carking care about the things of this world: such a care as is expressed in Matt. vi. 28, by "taking thought;" the Greek word is *τὸ μεριμνᾶν*, and in the 31st verse, *μὴ οὖν μεριμνήσῃτε*. A word importing such a thoughtfulness as distracts, and, as it were, divides the mind, and after it has divided it, unconscionably takes both parts to itself. In short, such a care is here meant, as lies like a kind of wolf in a man's breast, perpetually gnawing and corroding it, and is elsewhere expressed by St. Luke, xii. 29, by "being of doubtful mind." As when a man, after all his labours in the sober, rational, and industrious pursuit of his lawful calling, yet distrusts the issues of God's providence for a competent support therein, and dares not cast himself upon that goodness of God, which spreads its fatherly bounty over all, even the least, the lowest, and most contemptible parts of the creation. Such a one is a direct reproach to his great Lord and Maker, while he can find in his heart to think him so careful of the very meanest rank of beings, as in the mean time to overlook the wants of his noblest creatures, whom he made to lord it over all the rest, and, as a further honour, designed themselves for his own peculiar service; but yet so, that he never intended that they should serve even him, the Lord of all, for nothing. No; the methods of providence are far from being so preposterous, as while it adorns the lilies, and clothes the very grass of the field, to leave him naked, who was ordered by God and nature to set his feet upon both, and while it feeds the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the land, to suffer him to starve, for whose food both of them were made. Besides that man has a claim also to a promise for his support and sustenance, which none ever missed of who came up to the conditions of it. And now, can God require an easier and more reasonable homage from the sons of men, than that they should trust him, who neither will nor can fail them? and withal rest satisfied, quiet, and composed in their thoughts, while they do so? For surely, the infinite power and goodness of God may much more rationally be depended upon, than a man's own pitiful projects and endeavours, so much subject to chance and disappointment, be the man himself never so skilful, never so laborious. See with what strength of reason our Saviour argues down this solicitous, restless temper of mind, in the forementioned 6th of St. Matthew, from this one unanswerable con-

sideration, that if God so carefully and tenderly provides for mankind in their greatest concerns, surely he will not relinquish them in those, where the difficulty of a supply is less, and yet their inability to supply themselves altogether as great. "Is not the life," says our Saviour, "more than meat, and the body than raiment?" And shall we commit the former to the common mercies of Providence, but wholly distrust it for the latter? And instead thereof, fly for succour to our own short, fallible contrivances? When it is certain that our thinking can no more of itself work an alteration in our civil, than it can in our natural estate; nor can a man independently upon the overruling influence of God's blessing, care and cark himself one penny richer, any more than one cubit taller: the same all-disposing power no less marking out the exact bounds and measures of our estates, than determining the just stature of our bodies; and so fixing the bulk and breadth of one, as well as the height of the other. We vainly think we have these things at the disposal of our own wills; but God will have us know that they are solely the result of his. But,

(2.) Covetousness implies in it also a rapacity in getting. When men, as it were, with open mouth fly upon the prey; and catch with that eagerness, as if they could never open their hands wide enough, nor reach them out far enough, to compass the objects of their boundless desires. So that, had they (as the fable goes of Briareus) each of them one hundred hands, they would all of them be employed in grasping and gathering, and hardly one of them in giving or laying out; but all in receiving, and none in restoring; a thing in itself so monstrous that nothing in nature besides is like it, except it be death and the grave, the only things I know, which are always robbing and carrying off the spoils of the world, and never making restitution. For otherwise, all the parts of the universe, as they borrow of one another, so they still pay what they borrow, and that by so just and well balanced an equality, that their payments always keep pace with their receipts. But, on the contrary, so great and so voracious a prodigy is covetousness, that it will not allow a man to set bounds to his appetites, though he feels himself stinted in his capacities; but impetuously pushes him on to get more, while he is at a loss for room to bestow, and a heart to enjoy what he has already. This ravenous, vulture-like disposition the wise man expresses by "making haste to be rich," Prov. xxviii. 20; adding withal, that he who does so "shall not be innocent." The words are a *meiosis*, and import much more than they express, as there is great reason they should; for so much of violence is there in the course or practice here declared against, that neither reason nor religion, duty nor danger, shall be able to stop such a one in his career, but that he will leap over all mounds and fences, break through right and wrong, and

even venture his neck in pursuit of the design his head and his heart are so set upon. And this, I confess, is haste with a witness, but not one degree more than what is implied in "making haste to be rich."

For from hence it is that we see some estates, like mushrooms, spring up in a night, and some who are begging or borrowing at the beginning of the year, ready to be purchasers before it comes about. But this is by no means the course or method of nature; the advances of which are still gradual, and scarce discernible in their motions; but only visible in their issue. For nobody perceives the grass grow, or the shadow move upon the dial, till after some time and leisure we reflect upon their progress. In like manner, usually and naturally, riches, if lawful, rise by degrees, and rather come dropping by small proportions into the honest man's coffers, than pouring in like a torrent or land-flood, which never brings so much plenty, where at length it settles, but it does as much mischief all along where it passes.

Upon the whole matter, the greedy getter is like the greedy eater; it is possible, that by taking in too fast, he may choke or surfeit, but he will hardly nourish and strengthen himself, or serve any of the noble purposes of nature, which rather intends the security of his health, than the gratification of his appetite.

And in this respect, covetousness, a thing of itself bad enough, is heightened by the conjunction of another every whit as bad, which is impatience. A quality sudden, eager, and insatiable, which grasps at all, and admits of no delay; scorning to wait God's leisure, and attend humbly and dutifully upon the issues of his wise and just providence. Such persons would have riches "make themselves wings" to fly to them; though one, much wiser than they, has assured us, Prov. xxiii. 5, that when they "make themselves wings" they intend to "fly away."

But certainly, in this business of growing rich, poor men (though never so poor) should slack their pace, how open soever they found the way before them, and, as we may so express it, join something of the cripple to the beggar, and not think to fly or run forthwith to a total and immediate change of their condition, but to consider, that both nature and religion love to proceed leisurely and gradually, and still to place a middle state between two extremes. And therefore, when God calls needy, hungry persons to places and opportunities of raising their fortunes (a thing which of late has happened very often), it concerns them to think seriously of the greatness of the temptation which is before them, and to consider the danger of a full table to a person ready to starve. But generally such, as in this manner step immediately out of poverty into power, know no bounds, but are infinite and intolerable in their exactions. So that in Prov. xxviii. 3, Solomon most elegantly compares a poor man oppressing the poor, to "a sweeping rain which leaves no

food." A rain which drives and carries off all clean before it; the least finger of a poor oppressor being heavier than the loins of a rich one; for while one is contented to fleece the skin, the other strips the very bones. And all this to redeem the time of his former poverty, and at one leap, as it were, to pass from a low and indigent, into a full and magnificent condition. Though, for the most part, the righteous judgment of God overtakes such persons in the issue, and commonly appoints this for their lot, that estates sudden in the getting, are but short in the continuance. They rose, as I show, like land floods, and like them they fell.

(3.) Covetousness implies in it all sinister and illegal ways of getting. And if we dwell fully upon this, we shall find, that it is not for nothing that covetousness is called by the apostle; 1 Tim. vi. 10, "the root of all evil." A root as odious for its branches, as the branches for their fruit; a root fed with dirt and dunghills, and so no wonder if of as much foulness as fertility; there being no kind of vice whatsoever, but covetousness is ready to adopt and make use of it, so far as it finds it instrumental to its designs; and such is the cognation between all vices, that there is hardly any, but what very often happens to be instrumental, and conducing to others besides itself. It is covetousness which commands in chief in most of the insurrections and murders which have infested the world; and most of the perjuries and pious frauds which have shamed down religion, and even dissolved society, have been resolved into the commanding dictates of this vice. So that, whatsoever has been pretended, gain has still been the thing aimed at, both in the grosser outrages of an open violence, and the sanctified rogueries of a more refined dissimulation. None ever acted the traitor and the Judas expertly and to the purpose, but still there was a *Quid dabitis* behind the curtain. Covetousness has been all along, even in the most villanous contrivances, the principal, though hidden spring of motion; and lying, cheating, hypocritical prayers and fastings, the sure wheels by which the great work, as they called it, has still gone forward. Nay, so mighty a sway does this pecuniary interest bear even in matters of religion, that toleration itself (as sovereign a virtue as it is said to be of, for preserving order and discipline in the church), yet, without contribution, would hardly be able to support the separate meetings of the dissenting brotherhood; but that, if the people should once grow sullen, and shut up their purses, it is shrewdly to be feared that the preachers themselves would shut up their conventicles too. At present, it is confessed the trade is quick and gainful, but still, like other trades, not to be carried on without money. Gold is the best cordial to keep the *good old cause* in heart: and there is little danger of its fainting, and much less of starving, with so much of *that* in its pocket.

The truth is, covetousness is a vice of such a general influence and superintendency over all other vices, that it will serve its turn, even by those which at first view seem most contrary to it. So that it will command votaries to itself, even out of the tribe of Epicurus, and make uncleanness, drunkenness, and intemperance itself minister to its designs; for let a man be but rich and great, and there shall be enough to humour him in his lusts, that they may go shares with him in his wealth; enough to drink, and sot, and carouse with him, if by drinking with him, they may come also to eat, and drink, and live upon him, and by creeping into his bosom, to get into his pocket too; so that we need not go to the cozening, lying, perjured shopkeeper, who will curse himself into hell forty times over, to gain twopence or threepence in the pound extraordinary, and sits retailing away heaven and salvation for pence and halfpence, and seldom vends any commodity, but he sells his soul with it, like brown paper, into the bargain. I say, we need not go to these forlorn wretches, to find where the covetous man dwells, for sometimes we may find him also in a clean contrary disguise, perhaps gallanting it with his ladies; or drinking, and roaring, and shaking his elbow in a tavern with some rich young cully by his side; who from his dull, rustic converse (as some will have it) is newly come to town to see fashions, and know men, forsooth; and having newly buried his father in the country, to give his estate a more honourable burial in the city.

In short, the covetous person puts on all forms and shapes, runs through all trades and professions, haunts all places, and makes himself expert in the mystery of all vices, that he may the better pay his devotions to his god Mammon. And so, in a quite different way from that of the blessed apostle, he "becomes all things to all men," that he may "by any means gain something;" for he cares not much for gaining persons, where he can gain nothing else.

(4.) And lastly, covetousness implies in it a tenaciousness in keeping. Hitherto we have seen it filling its bags, and in this property we find it sealing them up. In the former, we have seen how eagerly it can catch; and in this latter, it shows us how fast it can gripe. And we need no other proof of the peculiar baseness of this vice than this. For as the prime and more essential property of goodness is to communicate and diffuse itself; so, in the same degree, that any thing encloses and shuts up its plenty within itself, in the same it recedes and falls off from the nature of good. If we cast our eyes over the whole creation, we shall find every part of the universe contributing something or other, either to the help or ornament of the whole. The great business of providence is to be continually issuing out fresh supplies of the divine bounty to the creature, that lives and subsists like a lamp fed by continual infusions, and from the same hand which first

lights and sets it up. So that covetousness is nothing so much as a grand contradiction to providence, whilst it terminates wholly within itself. The covetous person lives as if the world were made altogether for him, and not he for the world, to take in every thing and to part with nothing. Charity is accounted no grace with him, nor gratitude any virtue. The cries of the poor never enter into his ears; if they do, he has always one ear readier to let them out, than the other to take them in. In a word, by his rapines and extortions, he is always for making as many poor as he can, but for relieving none, whom he either finds or makes so: so that it is a question, whether his heart be harder, or his fist closer. In a word, he is a pest and a monster; greedier than the sea, and barrenner than the shore: a scandal to religion, and an exception from common humanity: and upon no other account fit to live in this world, but to be made an example of God's justice in the next.

Creditor and debtor divide the world, and he who is not one is certainly the other. But the covetous wretch does not only shut his hand to the poor in point of relief, but to others also in point of debt. Upon which account, the apostle James upbraids the rich men, James v. 4, "Behold," says he, "the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which of you is kept back, crieth." These, it seems, being the men who allow neither servants nor workmen any other wages, than, as the saying is, their labour for their pains. Men generally, as the world goes, are too powerful to be just, and too rich to pay their debts. For whatsoever they can borrow, they look upon as lawful prize, and extremely despise and laugh at the folly of restitution. But well it is for the poor orphan and the oppressed, that there is a court above, where the cause of both will be infallibly recognized, and such devourers be forced to disgorge the widow's houses they had swallowed, and the most righteous Judge be sure to pay those their due, who would never pay any else theirs.

The truth is, the covetous person is so bad a paymaster, that he lives and dies as much a debtor to himself as to any one else: his own back and belly having an action of debt against him; while he pines, and pinches, and denies himself, not only in the accommodations, but also in the very necessities of nature; with the greatest nonsense imaginable, living a beggar, that he might die rich, and leave behind him a mass of money, valuable upon no other account in the world, but as it is an instrument to command and procure to a man those conveniences of life, which such a one voluntarily and by full choice deprives himself of.

Nor does this vice stop here, but, as I verily believe, one great reason which keeps some persons from the blessed sacrament, may be resolved into their covetousness. For God, in that duty, certainly calls for a remembrance of the poor, and therefore there must be something offered as well as received by the worthy

communicant. But this the covetous wretch likes not, who perhaps could brook the duty well enough, were it an ordinance only for receiving and taking in; but since it requires also something to be parted with, he flies from the altar, as if he were to be sacrificed upon it; and so, turning his back upon his Saviour, chooses rather to forget all the benefits of his precious death and passion, than to cast his portion into the poor's treasury; a strange piece of good husbandry, certainly, for a man thus to lose his soul, only to save his pelf.

And thus much for the second thing considerable in the dehortation; namely, the thing we are therein dehorted from, which is, that mean, sordid, and degrading vice of covetousness. The nature of which I have been endeavouring to make out both negatively, by showing what it is not; and positively, by showing what it is, and wherein it consists. I proceed now to the

III. And last thing to be considered in the dehortation: which is, *the way and means whereby we are taught to avoid the thing we are thus dehorted from.* And that is, by using a constant care and vigilance against it. "Take heed, and beware of covetousness." Concerning which we must observe, that as every thing to be avoided is properly an evil or mischief; so such an evil, as is to be avoided by a singular and more than ordinary caution, is always attended with one or both of these two qualifications: 1. An exceeding aptness to prevail upon us. 2. An equal difficulty in removing it when it has once prevailed. In both which respects we are eminently cautioned against covetousness.

1. And first we shall find that it is a vice marvellously apt to prevail upon and insinuate into the heart of man; and that upon these three accounts.

- (1.) The near resemblance which it often bears to virtue.
- (2.) The plausibility of its pleas and pretences. And,
- (3.) The great reputation which riches generally give men in the world, by whatsoever ways or means they were gotten.

And,

(1.) It insinuates, by the near resemblance it bears to virtue. Virtue and vice dwell upon the confines of each other; always most distant in their natures, though the same too often in appearance; like the borderers of two kingdoms or countries, the greatest enemies, and yet the nearest neighbours. So that it must needs require no small accuracy of judgment, and such as few are masters of, to state the just limits of both, and a man must go nearer than the covetous person himself, to hit the dividing point, and to show exactly where the virtue ends and the vice begins. A small accident or circumstance often changing the whole quality of the action, and of lawful or indifferent, rendering it culpable and unlawful. Covetousness is confessedly

a vice, could we but know where to find it. But when it is confronted with prodigality, it is so apt to take shelter under the name and show of good husbandry, that it is hard to discern the reality from the pretence, and to represent nature in its true shape. Parsimony and saving, determined by due circumstances, are, questionless, the dictates of right reason, and so far not allowable only, but commendable also. For surely there can be no immorality in sparing, where there is no law whatsoever that obliges a man to spend. It is the common and received voice of the world, that nothing can be more laudably got, than that which is lawfully saved. Saving, as I hinted before, being nothing else but a due valuation of the favours of Providence, and a fencing against one of the greatest of miseries, poverty; which Solomon tells us, “comes like an armed man” upon the lavish and the prodigal; and when it comes, is of itself a curse and a temptation, and too often makes a man as wicked as he is poor. But such is the frailty of human nature, and its great proneness to vice, that under the mask of lawful parsimony, that *amor sceleratus habendi*, covetousness insensibly steals upon and gets possession of the soul, and the man is entangled and enslaved, and brought under the power of an ill habit, before he is so much as alarmed with its first approaches; and ready to be carried off by the plague, or some mortal distemper, before he is aware of the infection. But,

(2.) Covetousness is apt to insinuate also by the plausibility of its pleas. Amongst which, none more usual and general than the necessity of providing for children and posterity; whom, all will grant, parents should not be instrumental to bring into the world, only to see them starve when they are here. Nor are just the necessities of a bare subsistence to be the only measure of their care for them; but some consideration is to be had also of the quality and condition to which they are born, and consequently were brought into not by choice, but by descent. For it seems not suitable to the common and most impartial judgment of mankind, that one of a noble family and extraction should be put to hedging and ditching, and be forced to support himself with the labour of his hands and the sweat of his brow.* It is hard measure to be nobly born and basely endowed; to wear a title above one's circumstances, and so serve only as a foil to an elder brother. But now, by such provisions for

* But much different was the advice of a certain lawyer, a great confidant of the rebels in the time of their reign; who, upon a consult held amongst them, how to dispose of the Duke of Gloucester, youngest son of King Charles the first, then in their hands, with great gravity, forsooth, declared it for his opinion, that they should “bind him out to some good trade, that so he might eat his bread honestly.” These were his words, and very extraordinary ones they were indeed. Nevertheless, they could not hinder him from being made a judge in the reign of King Charles the Second. A practice not unusual in the courts of some princes, to encourage and prefer their mortal enemies before their truest friends.

posterity, the reason and measure of men's gains, from personal, is like to grow infinite and perpetual; and yet no charge of covetousness seems here able to take place; it being impossible for a man to be covetous in that in which no getting can be superfluous. The first plea of avarice therefore is, provision for posterity.

But then, if a man's condition be such, that all his cares are to terminate in his own person, and that he has neither sons nor daughters to lay up for, but that his whole family lives and dies with him, and one grave is to receive them all, why then covetousness will urge to him the necessity of hoarding up against old age, against the days of weakness and infirmity, when the strength of his body and the vigour of his mind shall fail him, and when the world shall measure out their friendships and respects to him only according to the dimensions of his purse. Upon which account one would think that all a man's gettings and hoardings up, during his youth, ought to pass but for charity and compassion to his old age; which must either live and subsist upon the stock of former acquisitions, or expect all that misery, which want, added to weakness, can bring upon it. The sight of an old man, poor and destitute, crazy and scorned, unable to help himself, or to buy the help of others, is a shrewd argument to recommend covetousness to one, even in his greenest years, and to make the very youngest and jolliest sparks, in their most flourishing age, look about them. It having been the observation and judgment of some, who have wanted neither wisdom nor experience, that 'an old man has no friend but his money.' And I heartily wish I could confute the observation.

But the like and no less plausible a plea will this vice also put in for providing against times of persecution, or public calamity; calling to a man's mind all the hardships of a civil war, all the plunders and rapines, when nothing was safe above ground; but a man was forced to bury his bags, to keep himself alive. And therefore, though at present there should be peace, and all about us calm and quiet; yet who knows how soon a storm may arise, and the spirit of rebellion and fanaticism put it into men's heads once more to raise armies to plunder, and cut throats *in the Lord?* and then, believe it, when the great work shall be thus carrying on, and we shall see our friends and our neighbours reformed out of house and home as formerly, it would be found worth while to have secured a friendly penny in a corner, which may bid us eat, when we should otherwise starve, and speak comfort to us, when our friends will not so much as know us.

With these and such like reasonings fallaciously applied, will covetousness persuade a man, both of the necessity and lawfulness of his raising heap upon heap, and joining house to house, and putting no bounds to his gains, when his hand is once in. And it must be confessed, that there is some show of reason for what has been alleged; but when again we shall consider that

the forementioned cases are all but future contingencies, which are by no means to be the rule of men's actions, our duty is only to look to the precept and the obligation of it, which is plain and present, and may be easily known; and for the rest, to commit ourselves to the good providence of God. For while we are solicitously providing against the miseries of age and persecution, how do we know whether we shall ever live to be old? or to see the calamity of our country, or the persecution of our persons? But however, if God shall see it for his honour to try and humble us with the miseries of any of these conditions, it is not all our art and labour, all our parsimony and providence, which can prevent them. And therefore, how plausible soever the pleas of covetousness may seem, they are far from being rational. But,

(3.) And lastly, Covetousness is apt to prevail upon the minds of men by reason of the reputation which riches generally give men in the world, by whatsoever ways or means they were gotten. It is a very great, though sad and scandalous truth, that rich men are at the very same time esteemed and honoured, while the ways by which they grew rich are abhorred and detested: for how is griping and avarice exclaimed against: how is oppression branded all the world over! All mankind seem agreed to run them down; and yet what addresses are made, what respects shown, what high encomiums given to a wealthy miser, to a rich and flourishing oppressor! The lucky effect seems to have atoned for and sanctified its vile cause; and the basest thing covered with gold, lies hid itself, and shines with the lustre of its covering.

Virtue, charity, and generosity, are indeed splendid names, and look bright in sermons and panegyrics, which few regard: but when we come to practice and common life, virtue, if poor, is but a sneaking thing, looked upon disdainfully, and treated coldly; and when charity brings a man to need charity, he must be content with the scraps from the table of the rich miser or the great oppressor. For no invitations are now made like that in the gospel, where messengers are sent with tickets to bring in guests "from the hedges and highways." No, it is not the way in our days to spread tables or furnish out banquets for the poor and the blind, the hungry and the indigent. For in our times (to the just shame of the fops our ancestors, as some call them) full bellies are still oftenest feasted; and "to them who have shall be given, and they shall have more abundantly." This is the way of the world, be the discourse of it what it will.

And as this is the general practice of the world, so it must needs be the general observation of the world too; for while men reproach vice, and caress the vicious; upbraid the guilt of an action, but adore its success; they must not think that all about them are so without eyes or common sense, as not to spy out the

prevarication, and to take an estimate of the real value of things and persons, rather by what they do than by what they talk. Since therefore it is so natural for every one to desire to live with as good esteem and reputation in the world as he can, it is no wonder if covetousness makes so strong a plea for itself in the hearts of men, by promising them riches, which they find so certain a way to honour and respect. And thus much for the first general reason of the caution, given by our Saviour, against covetousness; namely, its great aptness to prevail upon and insinuate into men's minds.

2. The other general reason is, the exceeding great difficulty of removing it when it has once prevailed. In which and the like cases, one would think it argument sufficient to caution any man against a disease, if we can but convince him of the great likelihood of his falling into it; and not only of 'that, but, in case he should fall into it, of the extreme difficulty (sometimes next to an impossibility) of his recovering and getting out of it. Both which considerations together certainly should add something more than ordinary to the caution of every wise man, and make him double his guards against so threatening a mischief. And as for covetousness, we may truly say of it, that it makes both the alpha and omega in the devil's alphabet, and that it is the first vice in corrupt nature which moves, and the last which dies. For look upon any infant, and as soon as it can but move a hand, we shall see it reaching out after something or other which it should not have; and he who does not know it to be the proper and peculiar sin of old age, seems himself to have the dotage of that age upon him, whether he has the years or no. For who so intent upon the world commonly, as those who are just going out of it? Who so diligent in heaping up wealth, as those who have neither will nor time to spend it?

If we should insist upon the reason of things, nothing seems more a prodigy, than to observe how catching and griping those are, who are utterly void of all power and capacity of enjoying any of these things which they so eagerly catch at. All which shows how fast this vice rivets itself into the heart which it once gets hold of; how it even grows into a part of nature, and scarce ever leaves the man who has been enslaved by it till he leaves the world.

Now, if we inquire into the reason of the difficult removal of this vice, we shall find that all those causes, which promoted its first insinuation and entrance into men's affections, contribute also to its settlement and continuance in the same; as the same sword which enables to conquer, enables also to reign and rule after the conquest. Covetousness, we show, prevailed by its likeness and resemblance to virtue, by the plausibility of its pleas, and by the reputation of its effects. All which, as they were so many arguments to the soul, first to admit and take in the vice, so they are as potent persuasives not to part with it. But the grand reason,

I conceive, which ties the knot so fast, that it is hardly to be untied, is this: that covetousness is founded upon that great and predominant principle of nature, which is self-preservation. It is indeed an ill-built superstructure, but yet it is raised upon that lawful and most allowed foundation. The prime and main design of nature, whether in things animate or inanimate, being to preserve or defend itself; which since it cannot do, but by taking in relief and succour from things without, and since this desire is so very eager and transporting, it easily overshoots in the measure of what it takes in, and thereby incurs the sin and contracts the guilt of covetousness; which is properly an "immoderate desire and pursuit of even the lawful helps and supports of nature."

Men dread want, misery, and contempt, and therefore think they can never be enough provided with the means of keeping off these evils: so that, if want, misery, and contempt, were not manifestly enemies to, and destructive of the enjoyments of nature; and nature were not infinitely concerned to secure and make good these enjoyments; and riches and plenty were not thought the direct instruments to effect this; there could be no such thing as covetousness in the world. But even money (the desire of all nations) would sink in its value, and gold itself lose its weight, though it kept its lustre. For to what rational purpose should men prowl and labour for that, without which nature could continue in its full, entire fruition of whatsoever was either needful for its support or desirable for its pleasure? But it is evident that men live and act under this persuasion, that unless they have wealth and plenty enough, they shall be needy, miserable, and despised, and that the way to have enough is to let nothing, if possible, go beside them. So that herein lies the strength of covetousness, that it acts in the strength of nature, that it strikes in with its first and most forcible inclination; which is to secure itself, both in the good it actually has, and against the evil it fears.

In short, therefore, to recapitulate the foregoing particulars: if caution and vigilance be ever necessary for the prevention of any evil, it must be of such a one as insinuates itself easily, grows upon a man insensibly, and sticks to him immoveably; and in a word, scarce ever loses its hold, where it has once got it. So that a man must be continually watching and fencing against it, or he shall be sure to fall by it.

And thus much for the first general part of the text, to wit, the dehortation from covetousness expressed in these words, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness." A vice which no character can reach the compass, or fully express the baseness of, holding fast all it can get in one hand, and reaching at all it can desire with the other. A vice which may but too significantly

be called the *Βορρυμία*,* or *appetitus caninus* of the soul, perpetually disposing it to a course of alternate craving and swallowing, and swallowing and craving; and which nothing can cure or put an end to, but that which puts an end to the man himself too. In a word, of so killing a malignity is it, that wheresoever it settles, it may be deservedly said of it, that it has enriched its thousands, it has damned its ten thousands. A hard saying, I confess; but it is the truth of it which makes it so. And therefore happy, no doubt, is that man, who maturely takes the warning which our Saviour so favourably gives him; and by shunning the contagion of a vice so peculiarly branded and declared against, neither contracts the guilt, nor comes within the number of those whom God himself, in Psalm x. 3, expressly tells us he abhors.

To which God, who so graciously warns us here, that he may not condemn us hereafter, be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

* Viz. *Insatiabilis edendi cupiditas; sive morbus, quo laborantes, etiam post cibum esuriunt.—Tusanus.*

SERMON XV.

PART II.

COVETOUSNESS PROVED NO LESS AN ABSURDITY IN REASON, THAN A CONTRADICTION TO RELIGION, NOR A MORE UNSURE WAY TO RICHES, THAN RICHES THEMSELVES TO HAPPINESS.

LUKE XII. 15.

And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

WHEN I entered upon the prosecution of these words, I observed in them these two general parts:

First, A dehoration or dissuasive from covetousness in these words—"Take heed, and beware of covetousness."

Secondly, A reason enforcing it, and joining the latter part of the text with the former, by the causal particle *for*; "for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

As for the first of these two, viz., the dehoration or dissuasion from covetousness, I have already despatched that in a discourse by itself, and so proceed now to the

Second general part, to wit, the reason enforcing the said dehoration, and expressed in these words, "For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

In the foregoing discourse, I showed that these words were an answer of our Saviour to a tacit argumentation formed in the minds of most men in the behalf of covetousness; which grounding itself upon that universal principle, that all men desire to make their life in this world as happy as they can, proceed to the main conclusion by these two steps; to wit, that riches were the direct and proper means to acquire this happiness; and covetousness the proper way to get and obtain riches.

The ground of which arguments, namely, that every man may design to himself as much happiness in this life as by all lawful means he can compass, our Saviour allows, and contradicts not in the least; as being indeed the first and most native result of those principles which every man brings into the world with

him. But as for the two consequences drawn from thence; the first of them, viz. that riches were the direct and proper means to acquire happiness, our Saviour denies as absolutely false; and the second, viz. that covetousness is the proper way to obtain riches, he does by no means allow for certainly true; though he does not, I confess, directly set himself to disprove it here; but in the text now before us, insists only upon the falsehood of the former consequence, as we, in the following discourse, shall likewise do; though even the latter of these consequences also shall not be passed over in its due place.

Accordingly, our Saviour here makes it the chief, if not the sole business of his present sermon (and that in defiance of the common sentiments of the world), to demonstrate the inability of riches for the attainment of true happiness, and thereby to make good the grand point insisted upon, viz. that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Where by "life," I suppose, there can be no need of proving that our Saviour does not here mean life barely and physically so taken, and no more; which is but a poor thing, God knows; but by "life," according to a metonymy of the subject for the adjunct, understands the happiness of life, in the very same sense wherein St. Paul takes this word in 1 Thess. iii. 8: "Now," says he, "we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord." That is, we live with comfort, and a satisfactory enjoyment of ourselves. And conformable to the same is the way of speaking in the Latin, as *Istuc est vivere*, and *Non est vivere, sed valere vita*. In which, and many the like expressions, *vivere* and *vita* import not the mere physical act of living; but the pleasure, happiness, and accommodations of life; without which, life itself is scarce worthy to be accounted life; but only a power of breathing, and a capacity of being miserable.

Now, that riches, wealth, and abundance,—the things which swell so big in the fancies of men, promising them mountains, but producing only a mouse,—are not, as they persuade themselves, such sure, unfailing causes of that felicity, which the grand desires of their nature so eagerly press after, will appear from these following considerations:

1. That no man, generally speaking, acquires or takes possession of the riches of this world, but with great toil and labour, and that very frequently even to the utmost fatigue. The first and leading curse, which God pronounced upon mankind in Adam, was, that "in the sweat of his brows he should eat his bread," Gen. iii. 19. And if it be a curse for a man to be forced to toil for his very bread, that is, for the most necessary support of life; how does he heighten and multiply the curse upon himself, who toils for superfluities, and spends his time and strength in hoarding up that which he has no real need of; and which, it is ten to one, but he may never have any occasion for. For so

is all that wealth, which exceeds such a competence as answers the present occasions and wants of nature. And when God comes to account with us, let our own measures be what they will, he will consider no more.

Now certain it is, that the general, stated way of gathering riches, must be by labour and travail, by serving other men's needs, and prosecuting their business, and thereby doing our own. For there is a general commutation of these two, which circulates and goes about the world, and governs all the affairs of it; one man's labour being the stated price of another man's money; that is to say, let my neighbour help me with his art, skill, or strength, and I will help him in proportion with what I possess. And this is the original cause and reason why riches come not without toil and labour, and a man's exhausting himself to fill his purse. This, I say, is the original cause; for I know, that, the world being once settled, estates come to be transmitted to many by inheritance; and such need nothing else to render them wealthy, but only to be born into the world. Sometimes, also, riches fall into men's hands by favour or fortune; but this is but seldom, and those who are thus the favourites of Providence make but a small number, in comparison of those who get what they have by dint of labour and severe travail. And therefore, as I said at first, this is the common, stated way which Providence allows men to grow rich by.

But now, can any man reconcile temporal happiness to perpetual toil? or can he enjoy any thing truly, who never enjoys his ease? I mean, that lawful ease which God allows and nature calls for, upon the vicissitudes of rest and labour. But he who will be vastly rich must bid adieu to his rest, and resolve to be a slave and a drudge all his days. And at last, when his time is spent in heaping up, and the heap is grown big, and calls upon the man to enjoy it, his years of enjoyment are past, and he must quit the world, and die like a fool, only to leave his son or his heir a rich man; who perhaps will be one of the first who shall laugh at him for what he had left him, and complain, if not also curse him, for having left him no more. For such things have happened in the world; and I do not find that the world much mends upon our hands. But if this be the way of it, as we see it is, what happiness a man can reap from hence, even upon a temporal account, needs a more than ordinary invention to find out. The truth is, the absurdity of the practice is so very gross, that it seems to carry in it a direct contrariety to those common notions and maxims which nature would govern the actions of mankind by.

2. Men are usually forced to encounter and pass through very great dangers, before they can attain to any considerable degrees of wealth. And no man, surely, can rationally account himself happy in the midst of danger. For while he walks upon the

very edge and brink of ruin, it is but an equal cast, whether he shall succeed or sink, live or die, in the attempt he makes. He who, for instance, designs to raise his fortunes by merchandise (as a great part of the world does), must have all his hopes floating upon the waves, and his riches, the whole support of his heart, entirely at the mercy of things which have no mercy, the seas and the winds. A sudden storm may beggar him; and who can secure him from a storm in the place of storms? A place where whole estates are every day swallowed up, and which has thereby made it disputable, whether there are more millions of gold and silver lodged below the salt waters, or above them; so that, in the same degree that any man of sense desires wealth, he must of necessity fear its loss; his desires must still measure out his fears; and both of them, with reference to the same objects, must bear proportion to one another; which, in the mean time, must needs make the man really miserable, by being thus held in a continual distraction between two very uneasy passions. Nevertheless, let us after all suppose that this man of traffic, having passed the best of his days in fears and dangers, comes at length so far to triumph over both, as to bring off a good estate from the mouth of the devouring element, and now thinks to sit down and solace his old age with the acquisitions of his younger and more daring years; let him, however, put what is past and what is present into the same balance, and judge impartially, whether the present enjoyment, which he reaps from the quiet and plenty of this poor remainder of his age (if he reaps any), can equal those perpetual fears and agonies, which not only anticipated and brought age upon him before its time, but likewise by a continual racking solicitude of thought, cut him off from all pleasure in the proper days of pleasure, and from those youthful satisfactions, which age must by no means pretend to. "I am this day fourscore years old," said the aged and rich Barzillai, in 2 Sam. xix. 35, "and can I yet taste what I eat or what I drink?" But, it seems, as dull as his senses were, he was severely sensible of the truth of what he said. And whosoever lives to Barzillai's years, shall not with all Barzillai's wealth and greatness (sufficient, as we read, to entertain a king and his army) be able to procure himself a quicker and a better relish of what shall be set before him, than Barzillai had. For all enjoyment must needs be at an end, where the powers of enjoying cease. And if, in the next place, we should pass from the delicacies of fare to the splendour of habit (another thing which most of the world are so much taken with), what could the purple, and the scarlet, and all the fineries of clothing avail a man, when the wearer himself was grown out of fashion? In a word, every man must be reckoned to have just so much of the world as he enjoys of it. And the covetous man, we have shown, will not, and the old man cannot enjoy it.

But some again (the natural violence of their temper so disposing them) are for advancing and enriching themselves, if possible, by war: a course certainly, of all others, the most unaccountable and preposterous. For is it not highly irrational for a man to sacrifice the end to the means? To hazard his life for the pursuit of that which, for the sake and support of life, only can be valuable? Well indeed may the man who has been bred up in and accustomed to camps, battles, and sieges, look death and danger boldly in the face; but yet, let him not think to look them out of countenance too; these being evils, no doubt, too great for mortality, with but common sense and reason about it, to defy. Nay, suppose we likewise, the man of arms so fortunate, as, in his time, to have fought himself into an estate (as several such have done), yet may not even this also prove a very slight and contemptible purchase, if, as soon as it is made, the man himself should drop out of this world, and so become wholly incapable of taking possession of what he had bought with his life, but only by his grave?

Thus, I say, it often fares with those soldiers of fortune, or field adventurers, as we may call them, from whom, if we cast our eye a little further, upon another sort of men, no less eager after gain and grandeur from their management of state affairs; shall we find their condition at all more secure? their happiness more firmly fixed? and less at a venture than that of those of the forementioned tribe? No, surely, no less hazards meet the statesman at the council-board, than accost the soldier in the field; and one had need be as good a fencer, as the other ought to be a fighter, to defend himself: the oppositions he is to contest with, being altogether as terrible and fatal, though not in the same dress. For he has the changeable will of his prince or superiors, the competition of his equals, and the popular rage of his inferiors, to guard and secure himself against. And he must walk with a wary eye and a steady foot indeed, who never trips nor stumbles at any of these cross blocks, which, some time or other, will assuredly be cast before him; and it is well if he carries not only his foot but his head too, so sure, as to fall by neither of them; many wise men, I am sure, have fallen so. For it is not wisdom, but fortune which must protect such a one; and fortune is no man's freehold, either to keep or to command.

Which being truly his case, I cannot judge that man happy who is in danger to be ruined every moment, and who can neither bring the causes of his ruin within the reach of his prospect, nor the avoidance of them within the compass of his power; but notwithstanding all his art, wit, and cunning, lies perpetually open to a thousand invisible, and, upon that account, inevitable mischiefs. And thus I have shown the dangers which attend the several ways and passages by which men aspire to wealth and greatness; the things upon which the abused reason of man-

kind so much dotes, and in which it places so much felicity, and finds so little. But,

3. Men are frequently forced to make their way to great possessions by the commission of great sins, and therefore the happiness of life cannot possibly consist in them. It has been a saying, and a remarkable one it is, that there is no man very rich, but is either an unjust person himself, or the heir of one or other who was so. I dare not pronounce so severe a sentence universally: for I question not, but through the good providence of God, some are as innocently, and with as good a conscience rich, as others can be poor: but the general baseness and corruption of men's practices has verified this harsh saying of too many; and it is every day seen how many serve the god of this world, to obtain the riches of it. It is true, the full reward of a man's unjust dealing never reaches him in this life; but if he has not sinned away all the sense, tenderness, and apprehensiveness of his conscience, the grudges and regrets of it will be still like death in the pot, and give a sad grumbling allay to all his comforts: nor shall his heart ever find any entire, clear, unmixed content in the wealth he has got, when he shall reflect upon the manner of his getting it: and assure him that nothing of all that which he possesses in the world, is yet paid for; so that, if the justice of God should exact his soul in payment of that vast score, which his sinful gains have run him into, when this sad debt come once to be cleared off, who then would be gainer; or what could be got, when the soul was lost?

One man, perhaps, has been an oppressor and an extortioner, and waded to all his wealth through the tears of widows and orphans. Another with blood and perjury, falsehood and lying, has borne down all before him, and now lords it in the midst of a great estate; and the like may be said of others, who, by other kinds of baseness, have done the same. But now, can any of these thriving miscreants be esteemed or called happy in such a condition? Is their mind clear, their conscience calm and quiet, and their thoughts generally undisturbed? For there can be no true happiness, unless they are so; forasmuch as all happiness must pass through the mind and the apprehension. But God has not left himself so without a witness, even in the hearts of the most profligate sinners, as to suffer great guilt and profound peace to cohabit in the same breast. Jonah must not think to disobey, and then to sleep securely and unmolested. No, the storm will quickly be about his ears, and the terrible remembrancer within will be rubbing up old stories, and breaking in upon his false repose with secret intimations of an impending wrath. So that, if the tempter, at any time, be at one elbow, to induce a man to sin; conscience will not fail to be jogging him at the other, to remind him what he has done, and what he is to expect thereupon. This has been the case of the most prosperous sinners in

the world ; these remorse and forebodings have stuck close to them in the midst of all their plenty, power, and splendour : a sufficient demonstration, doubtless, how thin and counterfeit all the joys of these grandees are, in spite of all the flourishes and fine shows they make in the opinion of the foolish world, which sees and gazes upon their glistering outside, but knows not the dismal stings and secret lashes which they feel within.

And thus much for the first general argument, proving that true happiness consists not in any earthly abundance, taken from the consideration of those evils through which men commonly pass into the possession of it.

II. The second general argument shall be taken from the consideration of such evils as attend men, when they come to be actually possessed of this abundance. As,

1. Excessive, immoderate cares. The very management of a great estate is a greater and more perplexing trouble than any that a poor man can be subject to. Great riches superinduce new necessities ; necessities added to those of nature, but accounted much above them ; to wit, the necessities of pomp, grandeur, and a suitable port in the world. For he who is vastly rich, must live like one who is so ; and whosoever does that, makes himself thereby a great host, and his house a great inn ; where the noise, the trouble, and the charge is sure to be his, but the enjoyment, if there be any, descends upon the persons entertained by him ; nay, and upon the very servants of his family, whose business is only to please their master, and live upon him, while the master's business is to please all that come about him, and sometimes to fence against them too. For a gainer by all his costs and charges, by all that he can give or spend, he shall never be. Such being the temper of most men in the world, that though they are never so kindly used, and so generously entertained, yet they are not to be obliged ; but go away, rather envying their entertainer's greatness, than acknowledging his generosity. So that a man, by widening or enlarging his condition, only affords the malicious world about him so many more handles to lay hold of him by, than it had before. It is, indeed, impossible that riches should increase, and that care, with many malign accidents besides, should not increase with them. This is the dark shadow, which still follows those shining bodies. And care is certainly one of the greatest miseries of the mind ; the toil and very day-labour of the soul. And what felicity, what enjoyment can there be in incessant labour ? For enjoyment is properly attractive, but labour expensive. And all pleasure adds and takes in something to the stores of nature ; while work and labour is still upon the exporting and the spending hand. Care is a consuming and a devouring thing, and with a kind of spiteful, as well as craving appetite, preys upon the best and noblest things

of a man, and is not to be put off with any of the dainties of his full table; but his thoughts, his natural rest and recreations, are the viands which his cares feed upon. And is not that wealthy great one, think we, very happy, whose riches shall force him to lie awake, while his very porter is asleep? and whose greatness shall hardly allow him so much as time to eat? Certainly, such a one sustains all the real miseries of want, no less than he who seeks his meat from door to door. For he is as much starved, who cannot find when, as he who cannot find what to eat; and he dies as surely, who is pressed to death with heaps of gold and silver, as he who is crushed under a heap of stones or dirt. The malignity and corroding quality of care is, to all intents and purposes of mischief, the same, be the cause of it never so different. And whether poverty or riches produce the vexation, the impression it makes upon the heart is alike from both. "They who will be rich," says St. Paul, 1 Tim. vi. 9, "pierce themselves through with many sorrows;" and those, it seems, sorrows not of the lighter and more transient sort, which give the mind but feeble touches and short visits, and quickly go off again; but they are such as strike daggers into it: such as enter into the innermost parts and powers of it: and in a word, pierce it through and through, and draw out the very life and spirit through the wound they make. These are the peculiar and extraordinary sorrows which go before, accompany, and follow riches: and there is no man, though in never so low a station, who sets his heart upon growing rich, but shall, in his proportion, be sure to have his share of them. But then, let us cast our eye upon the highest condition of wealth and abundance which this world affords; to wit, the royal estate of princes: yet neither can this be truly esteemed an estate of happiness and fruition; but as much advanced above all other conditions in care and anxiety, as it is in power and dignity. The greatest and the richest prince can have but the enjoyment of one man; but he sustains the united cares and concerns of as many millions as he commands. The troubles of the whole nation concentrate in the throne, and lodge themselves in the royal diadem. So that it may, in effect, be but too truly said of every prince that he wears a crown of thorns together with his purple robe (as the greatest of princes once did), and that his throne is nothing else but the seat imperial of care. But,

2. The second evil which attends the possession of riches, is an insatiable desire of getting more, Eccles. v. 10, "He who loves money shall not be satisfied with it," says Solomon. And I believe it would be no hard matter to assign more instances of such as riches have made covetous, than such as covetousness has made rich. Upon which account a man can never truly enjoy what he actually has, through the eager pursuit of what he has not; his heart is still running out; still upon the chase of a new game, and so never thinks of using what it has already acquired.

And must it not now be one of the greatest miseries, for a man to have a perpetual hunger upon him, and to have his appetite grow fiercer and sharper amidst the very objects and opportunities of satisfaction? Yet so it is usually with men hugely rich. They have, and they covet: riches flow in upon them, and yet riches are the only things they are still looking after. Their desires are answered, and while they are answered they are enlarged; they grow wider and stronger, and bring such a dropsy upon the soul, that the more it takes in the more it may; just like some drunkards, who even drink themselves athirst, and have no reason in the world for their drinking more, but their having drank too much already.

There cannot be a greater plague, than to be always baited with the importunities of a growing appetite. Beggars are troublesome, even in the streets as we pass through them; but how much more when a man shall carry a perpetually clamorous beggar in his own breast, which shall never leave off crying, Give, give, whether a man has any thing to give or no? Such a one, though never so rich, is like a man with a numerous charge of children, with a great many hungry mouths about him to be fed, and little or nothing to feed them with. For he creates to himself a kind of new nature, by bringing himself under the power of new necessities and desires. Whereas nature considered in itself, and as true to its own rules, is contented with little, and reason and religion enables us to take up with less, and so adds to its strength by contracting its appetites and retrenching its occasions.

There is no condition so full and affluent, but content is and will be a necessary supplement to make a man happy in it; and to compose the mind in the want of something or other, which it would be otherwise hankering after. And if so, how wretched must that man needs be, who is perpetually impoverishing himself by new indigences founded upon new desires and imaginary emptiness, still disposing him to seek for new reliefs and accessions to that plenty, which is already become too big for consumption and the just measures of nature; which never finds any real pleasure, but in the satisfaction of some real want!

But as for the insatiable miser, whom we are now speaking of, what difference is there between such a one and a man over head and ears in debt, and dogged by his creditors wheresoever he goes? For the miser is as much disquieted, dunned, and called upon by the eagerness of his own desires, as he whose door is haunted and rapped at every hour, by those who come crying after him for what he owes them; both are equally pulled and haled to do that which they are unable to do; for as the poor man cannot satisfy his creditors, so neither can the rich man satisfy his grasping, endless desires. And this is the direct and natural result of increasing wealth. Riches are still made the

reason of riches ; and men get only that they may lay up, and lay up only that they may keep. Upon which principle, it is evident, that the covetous person is always thinking himself in want, and consequently as far from any true relish of happiness, as he must needs be who apprehends himself under that condition, which of all things in the world he most abhors.

3. The third evil which attends men in the possession of the abundance of this world is, that such a condition is the proper scene of temptation. "It brings men," as the apostle tells us, in the forecited 1 Tim. vi. 9, "into a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, and such as drown men in destruction and perdition." So hard it is for the corruption of man's nature not to work, where it has such plenty of materials to work upon. For who so strongly tempted to pride, as he who has riches to bear it out? Who so prone to be luxurious, as he who has wealth to feed and maintain his luxury? Who so apt to besot himself with idleness, as he who can command and have all things, and yet do nothing? It is a miracle almost for a rich man not to be overrun with vice, having both such strong inclinations to it from within, and such inducements and opportunities to it from without. To be rich in money, and rich in good works too, rarely occur. All opportunity and power to gratify a man's vicious humour, is a shrewd temptation to him actually to do so. Where riches are at hand, all impediments and obstructions vanish. For what is it which gold will not command? What sin so costly, which the rich man may not venture upon, if he can but stretch his conscience to the measures of his purse? Such a one's condition places him in the very high-way to **damnation**; while it surrounds and besets him with all those **allurements** which are apt to beguile and ruin souls. And a man must have a rare mastery of himself, and a control of his affections, to be able to look a pleasing vice in the face, and to despise it, when the affluence of his fortune shall give him his free choice of all those pleasures, which his nature so mightily importunes him to. But it is scarce an age that can give us an instance of such an impregnable and reserved abstemiousness under such circumstances; men are generally treacherous and false to themselves and their greatest concerns; wretchedly weak and pliant to their innate viciousness, when it is once called forth and inflamed by the provocations it receives from the wealth and plenty they wallow in.

Whence it is, that many hopeful young men debauch and drown themselves in sensuality, and come at length to lose both their souls and their wits too; and that only because it was their lot to be born to great estates, and thereby to have money enough to keep pace with their lewd desires, and to answer them with full and constant supplies; while others, in the meantime, whose nature and temper was, perhaps, not at all better than

their own have taken to the ways of industry and virtue, and so made themselves both useful in their lives, and happy after their death, only through the mercy of Providence stinting their worldly fortunes, and thereby cutting off those incentives of lust and instruments of sin, which have inveigled and abused others, and brought them headlong to destruction. Certain it is, that a rich man must use great caution to keep himself clear from sin, and add greater strength and force to his resolutions to make himself virtuous, than men in other circumstances need to do: for he has greater temptations to break through than they have; and consequently cannot make good his ground at the same rate of vigilance and activity, which persons less assaulted may. Which being his case, it is hard to conceive what happiness there can be in that condition, which renders virtue, a thing in itself so difficult, infinitely more difficult; which turns the strait gate into a needle's eye, and makes hell itself, which is so broad already, ten times broader than it was before.

4. The fourth evil attending men in the possession of this earthly abundance is, the malice and envy of the world round about them. The bounties of Providence are generally looked upon with an evil eye, by such as are not the objects of them themselves. And some have no other fault so much as objected against them, to provoke the invectives and satires of foul mouths, but only that they thrive in the world, that they have fair estates, and so need not herd themselves with the rabble, nor lick the spittle of great ones, nor own any other dependences, but upon God in the first place, and upon themselves in the next. So long as malice and envy lodge in the breast of mankind, it is impossible for a man in a wealthy, flourishing condition, not to feel the stroke of men's tongues, and of their hands too, if occasion serves. The fuller the branches are, the more shall the tree be flung at. What impeached Naboth of treason and blasphemy, but his spacious vineyard, too convenient for his potent neighbour, to let the owner enjoy it long? What made the king of Babylon invade Judea, but the royal stores and treasures displayed and boasted of by Hezekiah before the Chaldean ambassadors, to the supplanting of his crown, and the miserable captivity of his posterity? In Sylla's bloody proscription, matters came to that pass in Rome, that if a man had but a fair garden, a rich jewel, or but a ring of value, it was enough to get his name posted up in the cut-throat roll, and to cost him his life, for having any thing worth the taking from him. Seldom do armies invade poor day-labouring countries; they are not the thin weather-beaten cottages, but the opulent trading cities, which invite the plunderer; and war goes on but heavily, where there is no prospect of spoil to enliven it. So that, whether we look upon societies or single persons, still we shall find them both owing this to their great wealth, that it gives them the honour to

be thought worth ruining, and a fit prey for those who shall think they deserve that wealth better than themselves; as, they may be sure, enough will.

And thus much for the second general argument, proving that true happiness consists not in any earthly abundance, taken from the consideration of those evils which, for the most part, if not always, attend and go along with it. But,

III. The third general argument for the proof of the same, shall be taken from the utter inability of the greatest earthly riches to remove those things which chiefly render men miserable: and this will appear to us, if we reflect, 1. Upon what affects the mind; and 2. Upon what affects the body. And here,

1. First for that which affects a man's spiritual part, his mind. Suppose that to be grieved and labouring under the most pressing and unsupportable of all griefs, trouble of conscience: and what can riches, power, or honour contribute to its removal? Can they pluck out any of those poisoned arrows, which the apprehension of God's wrath fasten in the soul? Can they heal the wounds and assuage the anguish of a conscience groaning and even gasping under the terrors of the Almighty? Nay, let the grief arise but from a temporal cause, as suppose the death and loss of a dear friend, the diminution of a man's honour, or the like; and what miserable comforters in any of these cases are the heaviest bags and the fullest coffers? The pleasure arising from all other temporal enjoyments cannot equal the smart which the mind endures from the loss of any one of them. For what pleasure did David find in his crown and sceptre, and all his royal greatness, when his dear (though sottishly beloved) Absalom was torn from him? What enjoyment had Haman in all his court preferments, his grandeur and interest in his royal master's affection, when Mordecai, his most maligned enemy, refused to cringe to him in the gate? Why just none at all, if we may take his word for it, who should know his own mind best. For in Esther v. 11, 12, when he had reckoned up all his wealth, glory, and greatness, together with his numerous offspring, designed, as he thought, to inherit all of it, he adds in the 13th verse,—and a remarkable passage it is—"Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." The pride of his swelling heart, and the envy of his malicious eye, racked and tormented him more than all that the splendour and magnificence of the Persian court (the greatest then in the world) could delight or gratify him with. And now, what poor contributors must these earthly enjoyments needs be to a man's real happiness, when a hundred pleasures shall not be able to counterbalance one sorrow? But that one cross accident shall sour the whole mass of a man's comforts; and the mind shall as really droop, languish, and pine away, while a man is surrounded

with vast treasures, rich attendance, and a plentiful table, as if he had neither where to lay his head, nor wherewithal to fill his mouth. For all the delight he does or can reap from his other comforts, serves only to quicken and increase the sense of that calamity which has actually taken possession of him. But in the

2. Place, let us consider the miseries which affect the body, and we shall find that the greatest pleasure arising from any degree of wealth or plenty whatsoever, is so far from reaching the soul, that it scarce pierces the skin. What would a man give to purchase a release, nay, but a small respite, from the extreme pains of the gout or stone; and yet, if he could fee his physician with both the Indies, neither art nor money can redeem, or but relieve him from his misery. No man feels the pangs or tortures of his present distemper (be it what it will) at all the less for his being rich. His riches indeed may have occasioned, but they cannot allay them. No man's fever burns the gentler, for his drinking his juleps in a golden cup. Nor could Alexander himself, at the price of all his conquests, antidote or recall the poisonous draught, when it had once got into his veins. When God shall think fit to cast a man upon his bed of pain or sickness, let him summon about him his thousands and his ten thousands, his lands and his rich manors, and see whether he can bribe, or buy off, or so much as compound with his distemper, but for one night's rest. No; the sick bed is so like the grave, which it leads to, that it uses rich and poor, prince and peasant all alike. Pain has no respect of persons, but strikes all with an equal and an impartial stroke.

We know how God reproved the foolish wordling, (as our Saviour tells us,) 'in Luke xii. 20: "Thou fool," says he, "this night shall thy soul be required of thee, and then whose shall all those things be, which thou hast hoarded up?" But we may bring the sentence here pronounced much lower, and yet render it dreadful enough, even within the compass of this life; and say, Thou fool, this night, this day shall thy health and strength be taken from thee; and then, what pleasure, what enjoyment will all thy possessions afford thee? God may smite thee with some lingering, dispiriting disease, which shall crack the strength of thy sinews; and suck the marrow out of thy bones; and then, what pleasure can it be to wrap thy living skeleton in purple, and rot alive in cloth of gold? when thy clothes shall serve only to upbraid the uselessness of thy limbs, and thy rich fare stand before thee only to reproach and tantalize the weakness of thy stomach; while thy consumption is every day dressing thee up for the worms? All which, I think, is a sufficient demonstration, that plenty and enjoyment are not the same thing. They are the inward strength and sufficiency of a man's faculties, which must render him a subject capable of tasting or enjoying the good

things which Providence bestows upon him. But as it is God only who creates, so it is he alone who must support and preserve these; and when he withdraws his hand, and lets nature sink into its original weakness and insufficiency, all a man's delights fail him, all his enjoyments vanish. For no man, to be sure, can enjoy himself any longer than he can be said to be himself.

But now, if riches are thus wholly unable of themselves to effect any thing towards a man's relief, under a corporal malady, how can they, as such, deserve the name of felicity? For what are they good for? What can they do for him? The man is sick, and his disease torments, and death threatens him; and can they either remove the one, or keep off the other? Nothing less. But it will be answered, perhaps, that when a man is well and healthy, they may serve him for many conveniences of life. They may do so, I confess; but then this also is as true, that he who is healthy and well, may enjoy all the necessary satisfactions which his nature calls for, though he has no other riches in the world, but those poor incomes which he daily earns with the labour of his hands or the working of his brain. So that the sum and result of all their efficacy towards a man's happiness, amounts but to this: that riches may indeed minister something to the making of that person happy, who is in such a condition of health and strength, as may enable him, if he pleases, to make himself happy without them. For a bare competence, and that a very slender one too, will answer all the needs of nature; and where a competence is sufficient, an abundance, I am sure, cannot be necessary. And this introduces the

4. And last argument, to prove that man's happiness consists not in any earthly abundance, taken from this consideration; that the greatest happiness which this life is capable of, may be, and actually has been, enjoyed without this abundance; and consequently, cannot depend upon it. Now that, undoubtedly, is the chief happiness of life; for the attainment of which all other things are designed but as the means and subservient instruments. And what else can this be, but the content, quiet, and inward satisfaction of a man's mind? For why, or for what other imaginable reason, are riches, power, and honour, so much valued by men, but because they promise themselves that content and satisfaction of mind from them, which, they fully believe, cannot otherwise be had? This, no doubt, is the inward reasoning of men's minds in the present case. But the experience of thousands (against which all arguments signify nothing) irrefragably evinces the contrary. For was there not a sort of men, whom we read of in the former ages of the world, called the ancient philosophers, who even while they lived in the world, lived above it, and in a manner without it; and yet all the while accounted themselves the happiest men in it? And from these, if we pass to the professors and practisers of a higher philosophy, the apos-

ties and primitive Christians, who ever so overflowed with spiritual joy as they did? "A joy unspeakable, and full of glory," as St. Paul terms it; a joy not to be forced or ravished from the heart once possessed of it, as our Saviour himself, the great giver of it, has assured us. Hear St. Paul and Silas singing out this joy aloud in the dismal prison, where they sat expecting death every moment. And from hence to proceed to the next ages of the church: who could be fuller of, and more transported with a joyous sense of their condition, than the martyrs of those primitive times, who were so far from any of the accommodations of this world, that their only portion in it, was to live in hunger, nakedness, and want, and stripped of every thing but the bodies, in and through which they suffered all these afflictions! And as this internal, spiritual comfort, is doubtless the highest that human nature is capable of, and may serve instead of all other, so it descends even to those of the lowest condition. And the poor, labouring peasant, with his coarse fare, and a good conscience to season and make a feast of it, feeds as cheerfully, and with as much inward satisfaction, as his great landlord, or flourishing neighbour can; there being, for the most part, as much of real enjoyment under the meanest cottage, as within the walls of the stateliest and most magnificent palaces. For does not the honest ploughman, whose strength is his whole estate, and his day's work his revenue, carry about him as light a heart, and as clear a breast, as he who commands armies, or can call thirty-five millions his own? No doubt he does; and his experience (an evidence too great to be borne down) will vouch the same. Accordingly, let any one show me that enjoyment or pleasure, which men seek for from a vast estate in land or moneys; and I will show the same or something equal to it, full as high and satisfactory, in that man who cannot call one foot of land in the whole world his own, and whose purse never reached beyond the present, nor knew what it was to lay up for the morrow. Many, doubtless, very many such there are, who eat their bread with as much relish, sleep as soundly, think as cheerfully, and rejoice as much in their homely dame, and ragged children, together with their high-shoed companions, as those who can command sea and land to their tables, domineer over kingdoms, and set their foot upon the necks of conquered nations.

Content is the gift of Heaven, and not the certain effect of any thing upon earth; and it is as easy for Providence to convey it without wealth as with it; it being the undeniable prerogative of the first cause, that whatsoever it does by the mediation of second causes, it can do immediately by itself without them. The heavens can and do every day derive water and refreshment upon the earth without either pipes or conduits; though the weakness of human industry is forced to fly to these little assistances to compass the same effects. Happiness and comfort stream imme-

diately from God himself, as light issues from the sun, and sometimes looks and darts itself into the meanest corners, while it forbears to visit the largest and the noblest rooms. Every man is happy or miserable, as the temper of his mind places him, either directly under, or beside the influences of the divine nature; which enlighten and enliven the disposed mind with secret, ineffable joys, and such as the vicious or unprepared mind is wholly unacquainted with. "We have nothing, and yet we possess all things," says the apostle, in 2 Cor. vi. 10. And can a greater happiness be imagined, than that which gives a man here all things in possession, together with a glorious eternity in reversion? In a word, it is not what a man has, but what he is, which must make him happy. And thus, as I have demonstrated the utter insufficiency of riches to make men happy, so to confirm the high reason of our Saviour's dissuasive from covetousness, against all objections, or so much as pretences to the contrary, we shall further observe, that covetousness is by no means a certain way to procure riches; and, if neither riches can make a man happy, nor covetousness make him rich, all pleas for it must needs be torn up by the very roots. And for this, we need not assign any other ground or cause of the strange and frequent disappointments which covetousness meets with in the ends it drives at; if we consider the nature of the means and instruments which it makes use of for the bringing of these ends about. Such as are fraud and force, and schism and sedition, sacrilege and rebellion, all of them practices carrying the curse of God inseparably cleaving to them and inherent in them. And to show this in the principal of them, the violation of things sacred, who ever knew any family made rich by sacrilege? or any robber of the altar, but sooner or later he fell a just sacrifice to the shrine he robbed? Covetousness may possibly sometimes procure such a one a broad estate for the present, but a long one never. Wealth may brave and flourish it for a while in the front and forepart of his life, but poverty generally brings up the rear. For the justice of God is never in jest, nor does it work by halves in such cases; but whether by a speedy or lingering execution, by striking or eating through the cursed thing, it will be sure to make good its blow at last. A notable instance of which we have in the faction which carried all before it in the Grand Rebellion of forty-one. Men were then factious and rapacious, because they were first covetous; and none more so, than a pack of incendiaries, who had usurped the name of ministers of the gospel. For these were the men who with such rage and vehemence preached down episcopacy and the established government of the church, in hopes to have had a great part, at least, of the revenues of it bestowed upon them for their pains. But, alas, poor tools! they understood not the work they were employed in; for the lay-grandeens, their masters (who had more wit with their godliness),

meant no such thing: no, the hunters never intended that the hounds should eat the hare; but though their throats, their noise, and their fangs were made use of to run it down and catch it; yet being once caught, they quickly found that it was to be meat only for their masters; and that whatsoever became of the constitution of the church, effectual care was taken, that the lands of it should go another way. And in good earnest, it would fare but very ill with mankind, if all that the mouth gapes for, the hand should be able to grasp. But, thanks be to God, innumerable are the ways which Providence has (some of them visible, and some secret and invisible, but all of them certain), by which it crosses and confounds the greedy wretch, even in his most refined contrivances and arts of getting; and thereby gives the world a convincing proof, one would think (if experience could convince men), that it is God, and God alone, who (as Moses said to the Israelites) must teach men to get wealth, as well as enable them to enjoy it. And consequently, that for a man to be covetous, and poor too, a miser and yet a beggar, is no such paradox, as to imply either an inconsistency in the thing itself, or a contradiction in the terms.

And now, in the last place, having finished the subject before us, in the several particulars proposed to be discoursed of by us: let us sum up and recapitulate all in a few words, viz. That since it is natural for men to design to make their lives as happy as they can; and since they promise themselves this happiness from riches, and thereupon use covetousness as the surest means to attain these riches; and yet, upon all the foregoing accounts, it is manifest, that neither can covetousness certainly procure riches, nor riches certainly procure a man this happiness; it must follow, by an unavoidable inference, that covetousness must needs be in the same degree irrational, in which riches are to this great end ineffectual; and consequently, that there is as little reason for avarice, as there is religion in it. And therefore, that the covetous person (whatsoever he may seem, either in his own or the world's opinion) is, in truth, neither rich, reasonable, nor religious; but chargeable with all that folly, and liable to all that misery, which is justly the shame and portion of those, who (according to those other excellent words of our Saviour, in the 21st verse of this chapter) "lay up treasure for themselves, and are not rich towards God."

To whom (as the sole giver of all happiness, whether with or without riches) be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON XVI.

NO MAN EVER WENT TO HEAVEN, WHOSE HEART WAS NOT THERE BEFORE.

[Preached before the University at Christ Church, Oxford, Oct. 15, 1699.]

MATTHEW VI. 21.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

As man is naturally a creature of great want and weakness, so he does as naturally carry a most intimate and inseparable sense of that want and weakness about him: and because a state of want must needs also be a state of uneasiness, there is nothing which nature puts a man with so much force and earnestness upon, as to attempt a supply and relief of the wants which he is so sensible of and so incommoded by. Insomuch that the whole course of his actings, from first to last, proceeds in this method: first, that every action which a man does, is in order to his compassing or obtaining to himself some good thereby. And secondly, that he endeavours to compass or obtain this good, because he desires it. And thirdly and lastly, that he desires it, because he wants it; or at least thinks that he does so. So that the first spring, which sets all the wheels and faculties of the soul a going, is a man's apprehension of some good wanting to complete the happiness of his condition.

But, as every good is not in the same degree contributive to this happiness, so neither is it in the same degree desirable; and therefore, since want (as we have noted) is still the measure, as well as ground of desire, that which answers all the wants, and fills all the vacuities of a rational nature, must needs be the full and ultimate object of its desires. And this was called by the philosophers, man's *summum bonum*; and here, by our Saviour, man's treasure; both expressions importing a good, so comprehensively great and equal to all the appetites of nature, that the presence and possession of this alone renders a man happy, and the want or absence of it miserable. Upon which account, though it be impossible that this prime or chief good should admit of any plurality, so as to be really more than one, yet in regard men take it in by their apprehensions, which are so exceedingly subject to error and deception, even in their highest concerns, and since error is various, and indeed infinite; hence it is that this treasure, or *summum bonum*, falls under a very great multiplicity: this man proposing to himself one thing, and that

man another, and a third something else for his chief good; and that from which alone he expects all that happiness and satisfaction which the condition of his nature renders him either capable or desirous of.

Now the words of the text may be considered two ways:

I. As they are an entire proposition in themselves. And,

II. As they are an argument relating to, and enforcing of a foregoing precept, in the 19th and 20th verses; and accordingly, in the prosecution of them, we shall take in both considerations.

I. And if we take them as they are *an entire proposition* in themselves, so they offer us these two things:

1. Something supposed, which is, that every man has something or other which he accounts his treasure or chief good. And,

2. Something expressly declared, namely, that whatsoever a man accounts his treasure, or chief good, upon that he places his heart, his whole desires and affections. And,

1. For the thing supposed or implied in the words, to wit, that every man has something or other which he accounts his treasure or chief good. The truth and certainty of which proposition will appear founded upon these two things: (1.) The activity of man's mind; and, (2.) The method of his acting. And,

(1.) For the first of these. The mind of man is of that spirituous, stirring nature, that it is perpetually at work. Something it is still in pursuit of, either by contemplation or desire; the foundation of which latter, I show, was want; and, consequently, as man will be always wanting something or other, so he will be always sending forth his desires to hunt after, and bring that thing in, which he wants; which is so true, that some men having compassed the greatest and noblest objects of their desires, so that desire could no longer ascend, as being already at the top, they have betaken themselves to inferior and ignoble exercises; so that, amongst the Roman emperors (then lords of a great part of the world), we find Nero at his harp, Domitian killing flies, and Commodus playing the fencer; and all this only to busy themselves some way or other; nothing being so grievous and tedious to human nature as perfect idleness.

But now, there is not any thing (though never so mean and trivial) which a man does, but he antecedently designs himself some satisfaction by the doing of it; so that he advances to every action as to a degree of happiness, as to something which, according to its measure and proportion, will gratify or please him, and without which he would be in that degree uneasy and troublesome to himself. The spirit of a man, like a flame, being of such an operative, and withal of such a catching quality, that it is still closing in with some desirable, suitable good, as the food that nourishes, and the subject that supports it; so impos-

sible is it that desire should wholly lie still. For though the soul had actually all that it could enjoy, yet then desire would run out into the future, and from the present fruition project the continuance and preservation of its beloved object. In short, what blood is to the body, that desire is to the soul; and as the blood will circulate while the body lives, so desire will act and range about while the soul subsists; and nothing but the annihilation of one can supersede or stop the motion of the other.

And the truth is, this innate restlessness of desire implanted in the soul of man, is the great engine by which God would draw it to himself: and if men would be so far true to themselves and to the most ruling principles of their nature, as to keep desire still upon the advance, till it fixed upon something which would absolutely and fully satisfy it, it were impossible but that, in the issue, it should terminate in God. But that which makes this great principle so ineffective of any true happiness to man, is that he does not carry it constantly and directly forward, but often suffers it to recur or turn aside to former false satisfactions; first tasting an object, and then, upon trial, leaving it for its emptiness; and yet afterwards returning to it again, from a vain hope to speed better than he had done before. So that by this means there is a continual restless circulation from one empty thing to another. The soul, in this case, being just like a sick man, still altering his postures in order to his ease; though, when he has tried all, he finds no more ease in one than in another; a certain demonstration that the soul itself, in the present state of nature, is in a most deplorably sick and disordered condition. But,

(2.) The second argument to prove that every man has something or other which he accounts his treasure, his peculiar, or chief good, shall be taken from the method of his actings, which still proceeds by a direction of means to one great and last end. For as an infinite progress is exploded in all matters of ratiocination, as absurd and impossible, so it is equally absurd in matters of practice; it being not more necessary to assign and fix some first principle of discourse, than to state some last end of acting; all a man's practices hanging loose and uncertain unless they are governed and knit together by the prospect of some certain end.

Now it is the same thing which sustains these several denominations of last end, chief good, or treasure; all and every one of them signifying neither more nor less than the grand and ultimate term, to which a rational agent directs all his actions and desires: every man naturally and necessarily intending some one principal thing; to the acquiring of which, all that he does, thinks, or desires, is subservient, and in which, as in a kind of centre, all his actions meet and unite.

For though a man has not continually and actually the prospect of that end in every one of his actions, yet he has it

habitually and virtually; forasmuch, as being once designed by him, all his actions tend to and promote the compassing of it: as it is not necessary that a traveller should have his journey's end in his thoughts every step that he takes; but it is enough that he first designs it, and in the strength of that design is by every step carried nearer and nearer to it; every man has some prime, paramount object, which employs his head, and fills his heart, rules his thoughts, and, as it were, lies in his bosom, and is to him above and instead of all other enjoyments whatsoever. And thus much for the thing supposed or implied in the words, namely, that every man has some peculiarly valued thing, which he accounts his treasure, or chief good. But,

2. The other thing to be considered by us is, that which is expressly declared in the text, namely, that whatsoever a man places his treasure or his chief good in, upon that he places his heart also. Where, according to the language of scripture, the word *heart* compendiously denotes to us all the powers and faculties of man's soul, together with their respective motions and operations. And since the word *treasure* is a metaphorical term for a man's prime or chief good, we are to take an account how a man prosecutes this good, from the analogy of those actions which he exerts with reference to a treasure; and which, I conceive, may be reduced to these four. As,

(1.) A restless and laborious endeavour to acquire and possess himself of it. There is no man, who heartily and in good earnest desires to be rich, or great, or learned, who can be idle. For desire is the spring of diligence, and the heart infallibly sets both head and hands, and every thing else on work. Great desire is like a great fire, and all difficulties before it are like stubble; it will certainly make its way through them, and devour them. From whence it is, that it generally proves so dangerous, and too often fatal, to stand between a man (especially if in place and power) and that which he most desires; and many innocent and brave persons have to their cost found it so. For dangers and death itself shall be nothing; conscience and religion nothing; nay, the very hopes of heaven, and the fears of hell shall be accounted as nothing, when a furious, headstrong desire shall resolve to break through them all; and like Hannibal in his march, cut through rocks and mountains, till it either finds or makes a way to its beloved object. What made Jacob think those seven years of hard service for Rachel but a few days, as it is said in Gen. xxix. 20, but the extraordinary and invincible love which he bore to her? And what makes the trader into foreign countries defy the winds, and the seas, and hazard the safety which he actually has and loves, but the wealth which he loves more? All the stupendous instances of courage, patience, industry, and the like, which have so swelled the volumes of history, and amused the world, have been but the effects of great and victorious

desire; they are all of them but the instruments of love, to compass the things which men have first set their hearts upon; so that when courage takes the field for battle, we may be sure that it is desire which leads it on; filling the mind with glorious ideas of the prize it contends for. All the noble violences done to nature have been resolvable into this cause; nay, the very restraints of appetite have been but the effects of an appetite more controlling and predominant.

What is it that a man more naturally affects than society and converse? (it being a kind of multiplication of himself into every person of the company he converses with.) And what, by consequence, can be more uneasy to this *ζῶον πολιτικόν*, this sociable creature, than the dry, pensive retirements of solitude? Nevertheless, when a nobler thing shall have seized his imagination, and his desires have taken a flight above the first inclinations of his nature, by inspiring him with the diviner love of knowledge, or being serviceable to his country; why then, he can, with delight, retreat into his cell, dwell with himself, and converse with his own thoughts, and in those higher speculations, forget all his merry meetings and companions; nay, and his very food and rest, and live not only above the pleasures, but almost above the wants of nature too. In Prov. xviii. 1, Solomon tells us, that "through desire, a man having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom." So that it is this mighty thing, desire, which makes a man break off and sequester himself from all those jollities, those airy empty diversions, which use to court and win the appetites of vulgar souls. Thus nature, we see, is forced to bend to art; art is the daughter and issue of necessity; and the standard and measure of this necessity, is desire; desire, which nothing almost can withstand or set bounds to; which makes paths over the seas; turns the night into day; and in a word, charges through hunger and poverty, and all those hardships which human nature is so apt to shrink under, but it will, at length, arrive at the satisfaction which it is in pursuit of.

What high and vast achievements does the apostle in the eleventh of the Hebrews ascribe to faith! As, the subduing of kingdoms, stopping the mouths of lions, quenching the violence of fire, out of weakness making men strong, and that to such a degree, as to endure tortures, cruel mockings, scourgings, bonds, and imprisonments; nay, and to be stoned, sawn asunder, and slain with the sword. But how did faith do all this? Why, in the strength of love: faith being properly the eye of the soul to spy out and represent to it those excellent, amiable things, the love and desire of which should be hotter than fire, and stronger than death; bearing a man through and above all the terrors of both, for the obtaining of so transcendent a good. In short, faith shows the soul its treasure; which being once seen by it, naturally inflames the affections; and they as naturally engage

all the faculties and powers of soul and body, in a restless, indefatigable endeavour after it. And thus, in all those heroic instances of passive fortitude, faith wrought by love, and therefore it wrought wonders.

(2.) Whatsoever a man accounts his treasure, that he places his whole delight in; it entertains his eye, refreshes his fancy, feeds his thoughts, and, next to his conscience, affords him a continual feast. It fills and answers all his capacities of pleasure, and to please, we know, is much more than barely to support. It is the utmost limit of enjoyment; the most refined part of living; and, in a word, the last and highest thing which nature looks for. It quenches a man's thirst, not only as water, which just keeps nature alive, but as wine, which both sustains and gratifies it too; and adds a pleasure, as well as serves a necessity.

Nothing has so strong and fast a hold upon the nature and mind of man, as that which delights it: for whatsoever a man delights to do, by his good will he would be always doing: delight being that which perpetuates the union between the will and the object, and brings them together, by the surest, the most voluntary and constant returns. And from hence, by the way, we may affirm it as a certain, unfailing truth, that no man ever was or can be considerable in any art or profession whatsoever, which he does not take a particular delight in; for that otherwise, he will never heartily and assiduously apply himself to it: nor is it morally possible that he should.

Men, indeed, in the course of this world, are brought to do many things, mere necessity enforcing them, and the want and weakness of their condition creating that necessity. But still, in all such cases, the man goes one way and his desires another; for he acts but as a slave under the eye of a severe master; the dread of some greater suffering making him submit to the disciplines of a less. But unshackle his nature, and turn his desires loose, and then you shall see what he will choose in order to his pleasure, and the free unrestrained enjoyment of himself. An epicure may be brought to confine himself to his chamber and take physic (as none generally need it more); but will he look upon the potion with the same eye with which he uses to see the wine sparkle in the glass? or rejoice in the company of his physician as much as in that of his boon companions? No, the actions of pleasure carry quite differing signs and marks upon them from such as are forced; marks, above all the arts of dissimulation, or the powers of compulsion. For so far as any thing pleases the heart, it commands it: and the command is absolute, and the obedience cheerful.

(3.) Whatsoever a man accounts his treasure, from that he derives the last support of his mind in all his troubles. Let an ambitious man lose his friends, his health, or his estate; yet if the darling of his thoughts, his honour and his fame, continue

entire, his spirit will still bear up. And let a voluptuous man be stripped of his credit and good name, his pleasures and sensuality, in the midst of all his disgrace, shall relieve him. And lastly, to name no more, let a covetous miser have both pleasure and honour taken from him, yet so long as his bags are full, and the golden heaps glisten in his eyes, his heart will be at ease, and other losses shall affect him little; they may possibly raze the surface, but they descend not into the vitals of his comforts.

The reason of all which is, because an ambitious person values honour, a voluptuous man pleasure, and a covetous wretch wealth, above any other enjoyment in the world; all other things being but tasteless and insipid to them, in comparison of that one which is the sole minion of their fancy, and the idol of their affections. And accordingly, it would be found but a vain and fruitless attempt, to go about to move the heart of any of these persons, but by touching upon the proper string that ties and holds it; so that the way to humble and bring down an ambitious aspiring man is to disparage him, to expose, and show his blind side (which such kind of persons never fail to have); and the most effectual course to make a covetous man miserable (in the right sense) is to impoverish him: and when such a change of condition once passes upon such persons, they become like men without either life or spirit, the most pitiful, forlorn, abject creatures under heaven, and full of that complaint of Micah, in Judges xviii. 24: "Ye have taken away my gods, and what have I more?" For whatsoever a man accounts his chief good, so as to suffer it to engross and take up all his desires, that he makes his god, that he deifies and adores, whether he knows so much or no. For certain it is, that if he would lay out himself never so much in the acts of religion, he could do no more even to God himself, than love him, trust in him, and rely upon him, and in a word, give him his heart: nor indeed does God require any more; for it is a man's all. Take the heart, and you have the man by consequence. Govern the spring, and you command the motion. The whole man (as I may so express it) is but the appendix of his own heart.

(4.) And lastly, whatsoever a man accounts his treasures, for the preservation of that he will part with all other things, if he cannot enjoy that and them together. See a merchant in a storm at sea, and what he values most he will be sure to throw overboard last; every man, when he is exposed to any great and imminent danger, marshals his enjoyments just as Jacob did his family, when he was to meet his brother Esau, whom he was in such fear of, Gen. xxxiii. 2: the handmaids and their children he put foremost; Leah and her children next; but Rachel and her children the hindermost of all. The reason of which was, because he had set his heart most upon her, and therefore would have her furthest from the danger, if it might be escaped, and

last in the suffering, if it proved unavoidable. A father will be rather stripped of his estate, than bereaved of his children; and if he cannot keep them all, he will (though with the loss of the rest) redeem the son of his affections.

It is possible, indeed, that a man himself may not always perfectly know what he loves most, till some notable trial comes, which shall separate between him and what he has, and call for all his enjoyments one after another; and then presently his eyes shall be opened, and he shall plainly find, that the garment which sits nearest to him, shall by his good will be last torn from him. Bring a man under persecution, and that shall tell him whether the peace of his conscience, or the security of his fortune, be the thing which he prefers and values most. That shall tell him whether he had rather be plundered or perjured; and whether the guilt of rebellion and sacrilege does not strike a greater horror into him, than all the miseries of an ejection or sequestration. But if, at the critical time of trial, such a one shall surrender up his conscience, that he may continue warm in his house and his estate, let him no longer doubt what it is that is his treasure, and what lies deepest in his heart. For it is that which he can most hardly be without. But his conscience, it seems, he can easily shake hands with; and therefore wheresoever he may place his religion, it is certain that he places his happiness somewhere else.

“Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his life,” commonly speaking; but let a man love any thing better than his life, and life itself shall be given for it. And the world has seen the experiment; for some have loved their country better than their lives, and accordingly have died for it; and some their parents, some their honour, to that degree, as to sacrifice their dearest blood for the preservation of one and vindication of the other. But still, this is the sure, infallible test of love, that the measure of its strength is to be taken by the fastness of its hold. Benjamin was apparently dearest to his father, because he was still kept with him, while the rest of his brethren were sent from him. He was to him as the apple of his eye; and therefore no wonder if he could not endure to have him out of it.

And thus I have done with the first consideration of the words; namely, as they are an entire proposition in themselves. I come now to the

II. To wit, As they are *an argument relating to and enforcing of the foregoing precept* in the 19th and 20th verses, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust do corrupt, and thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust do corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal. For where *your* treasure is, there will your heart be also.” The force of which

argument is founded upon this clear and convincing ratiocination; to wit, that it is infinitely foolish and below a rational creature to place his heart upon that, which is by no means worth the placing of his heart upon; and therefore since it is undeniably evident, that a man will place his heart upon that which he makes his treasure, it follows, that he cannot without extreme folly make any thing his treasure, which can neither be secured from rapine, nor preserved from corruption; as it is certain that nothing in this world can.

This, I say, is the sum and force of our Saviour's argument: in pursuit of which, we are to observe, that there are two things which offer themselves to mankind, as rivals for their affections; to wit, God and the world; the things of this present life, and of the future. And the whole strength of our Saviour's discourse bears upon this supposition, that it is impossible for a man to fix his heart upon both. No man can make religion his business, and the world too: no man can have two chief goods. It is indeed more impossible than to serve two masters: forasmuch as the heart is more laid out upon what a man loves, than upon what he serves. Besides that the soul is but of a stinted operation; and cannot exert its full force and vigour upon two diverse and much less contrary objects. For that one of them will be perpetually counterworking the other; and so far as the soul inclines to one, it must in proportion leave and go off from the other; so that an equal adhesion to them both, implies in it a perfect contradiction. For why else should the word of truth so positively tell us, that "if we love the world, the love of the Father is not, cannot be in us?" 1 John ii. 15. Men, I know, think to join both, but it is because they understand neither. For a man must first have two hearts, and two souls, and two selves, before he can give a heart to God, and a heart to the world too. And therefore Christ does not state this matter upon a bare priority of acquisition, as if he had bid men first lay up treasure for themselves in heaven, and after that allowed them, with the same earnestness, to provide themselves treasures here on earth likewise, and so by that means successively grasp the full happiness of both worlds: for he knew that the very nature of the thing itself made this impracticable, and not to be effected; forasmuch as the acquisition of either world would certainly engage and take up the whole man, and consequently leave nothing of him to be employed about acquiring the other.

Whereupon Abraham speaking to the rich man in the gospel, who had flourished in his "purple and fine linen, and fared deliciously every day," tells him, that he in his lifetime had received his good things. *His* they are called emphatically, *his* by peculiar choice. They were the things he chiefly valued and pitched upon, as the most likely to make him happy; and consequently, having actually enjoyed them, and therefore compassed the ut-

most of his desires, his happiness was at an end; he had his option; and there was no further provision for him in the other world: nor indeed was it possible that he should find any, where he had laid up none. Those words of our Saviour being most assuredly true, whether applied to men's endeavours after the things of this life, or of another: that "verily they have their reward." That is to say, the result and issue of their labours will still be suitable to the end which governed and directed them. For where men sow, there they must expect to reap: it being infinitely absurd to bury their seed in the earth, and to expect a crop in heaven. And accordingly, in the eleventh of the Hebrews, we find, that at the same time the saints of old (there spoken of) declared themselves expectants of a land of promise hereafter, they also declared themselves strangers and pilgrims here. And therefore let not men mock and deceive themselves, by thinking to compass heaven with one hand, and earth with the other; and so to reign as princes in both. For the wisdom of God has decreed it otherwise; and judged one world enough for one man, though it gives him his choice of two.

It being clear therefore, that a man cannot set his heart both upon God and the world too, as his treasure, or chief good; let us, in the next place, see which of these two bids highest for this great prize, the heart of man. And since there are but these two, there cannot be a more expedite way to evince that it belongs to God, than by proving the absurdity of placing it upon the world. And that will appear upon a double account.

1. If we consider the world in comparison with the heart or mind of man. And,

2. If we consider it absolutely in itself. And,

1. If we consider it in comparison with the heart of man, we shall find that the heart has a superlative worth and excellency above any thing in this world besides; and therefore ought by no means to be bestowed or laid out upon things so vastly inferior to itself. For it is that noble part of man which God has drawn and imprinted a lively portraiture of his own divine nature upon; that part which he has designed for his own peculiar use. For God made the heart for no other purpose but that he might dwell in it; giving us understandings able to pierce into and look through the fairest and most specious offers of the world, together with affections large enough to swallow and take down all that the whole creation can set before them, and yet remain hungry and unsatisfied still. And are such faculties as these, think we, fit to be entertained only with froth and wind, emptiness and delusion? And those things can be no more, which are always promising satisfaction, but never give it. For surely, such low enjoyments as meat, drink, and clothes, are not sufficient to satisfy or make a man happy; and yet all the necessities of the natural life are fully answered by these; and whatsoever, upon that

account, is desired more, is but the result of a false appetite founded in no real want, but only in fancy and opinion. Nevertheless, there are, I confess, spiritual wants, which nothing can satisfy but what is supernatural.

And therefore, the great and good God, who gave us our very being, and so can need nothing that we either are or have, yet vouchsafes to solicit and even court our affections; and sets no other price upon heaven, glory, and immortality, nay, and upon himself too, but our love; there being nothing truly great and glorious, which a creature is capable of enjoying, but God is ready to give it a man in exchange for his heart.

How high is reason, and how strong is love! And surely God never gave the soul two such wings, only that we might creep upon the ground, and place our heart and our foot upon the same level. Let the epicure therefore, or voluptuous man, from amongst all his pleasures, single out that one, which he reckons the best, the fullest, and most refined of all the rest: and to offer it to his reason and affections; and see whether it can so acquit itself to the searching impartial judgment of the one, and the unlimited appetite of the other; that when he shall have taken his utmost fill of it, and gone off from the enjoyment, he shall be able to say, Here have I found all the satisfaction that could be thought of or imagined: or his affections be able to tell him, Here have we had all the sweetness that could be wished for or desired. But, on the contrary, do they not rather depart thirsty and melancholy, and abashed with the present sense of their disappointment, and still casting about for something or other to piece up the flaws and defects of such broken fruitions? So vast a difference is there in these matters, between surfeit and satisfaction.

The heart of man is intimately conscious to itself of its own worth and prerogative; and therefore is never put to search for any thing of enjoyment here below, but it does it with a secret regret and disdain, scorn and indignation; like a prince imprisoned, and forced to be ruled and fed by his own subjects; for so it is with that divine being, the soul, while depressed by the body to a condition so much below itself.

But God sent not man into the world with such mighty endowments, so much to enjoy it, as to have the honour of despising it; and upon a full experience of its woful vanity, to find cause in all his thoughts and desires to return and fly back to his Maker; like the dove to the ark, when it could rest no where else. But,

2. We are to consider the world absolutely in itself; and so we shall find the most valued enjoyments of it embased by these two qualifications: (1.) That they are perishing; and (2.) That they are out of our power: one of them expressed by "moths and rust corrupting them," and the other by "thieves breaking through and stealing them." The first representing them as

subject to decay from a principle within; the second, as liable to be forced from us by a violence from without; and so upon both accounts utterly unable to make men happy, and consequently unworthy to take possession of their hearts.

(1.) And first, for the perishing state and quality of all these worldly enjoyments: a thing so evident, or rather obvious to common sense and experience, that no man in his right wits can really doubt of it, and yet so universally contradicted by men's practice, that scarce any man seems to believe it. No, though the Spirit of God in scripture is as full and home in the character it gives of these things, as experience itself can be; sometimes expressing them by fashions, which we know are always changing; and sometimes by shadows, which no man can take any hold of; and sometimes by dreams, which are all mockery and delusion: thus degrading the most admired grandeurs of the world from realities to bare appearances, and from appearances to mere nothings.

Nor do they fail only, and lose that little worth they have, but they do it also by the vilest and most contemptible things in nature; by rust and cankers, moths and vermin, things which grow out of the very subject they destroy, and so make the destruction of it inevitable. And how can any better be expected, when men will rather dig their treasures and comforts from beneath, than fetch them from above? For it is impossible for such mortals to put on immortality, or for things in the very nature of them calculated but for a few days, to last for ever. All sublunary comforts imitate the changeableness, as well as feel the influence of the planet they are under. Time, like a river, carries them all away with a rapid course; they swim above the stream for a while, but are quickly swallowed up and seen no more. The very monuments men raise to perpetuate their names, consume and moulder away themselves, and proclaim their own mortality as well as testify that of others. In a word, all these earthly funds have deficiencies in them never to be made up.

But now, on the other side, the enjoyments above, and the treasures proposed to us by our Saviour, are indefectible in their nature, and endless in their duration. They are still full, fresh, and entire, like the stars and orbs above, which shine with the same undiminished lustre, and move with the same unwearied motion, with which they did from the first date of their creation. Nay, the joys of heaven will abide, when these lights of heaven shall be put out; and when sun and moon, and nature itself shall be discharged their stations, and be employed by Providence no more; the righteous shall then appear in their full glory; and being fixed in the divine presence, enjoy one perpetual and everlasting day; a day commensurate to the unlimited eternity of God himself; the great Sun of righteousness, who is always rising, and never sets.

(2.) The other degrading qualification of these worldly enjoyments is, that they are out of our power. And surely, that is very unfit for a man to account his treasure, which he cannot so much as call his own; nor extend his title to, so far as the very next minute; as having no command nor hold of it at all, beyond the present actual possession; and the compass of the present (all know) is but one remove from nothing. A rich man to-day, and a beggar to-morrow, is neither new nor wonderful in the experience of the world; for he who is rich now, must ask the rapacity of thieves, pirates, and tyrants, how long he shall continue so; and rest content to be happy for just so much time as the pride and violence, the cruelty and avarice of the worst of men shall permit him to be so; a comfortable tenure, doubtless, for a man to hold his chief happiness by.

But now, on the contrary, nothing is so absolutely and essentially necessary to render any thing a man's treasure or chief good, as that he have a property in it, and a power over it; without which, it will be impossible for him to be sure of any relief from it, when he shall most need it. For how can he be sure of that, of which he has no command? And how can he command that, which a greater force than his own shall lay claim to? For let those puny things called law and right say what they will to the contrary, if the matter comes once to a dispute, all the good things a man has of this world will be his, who has the strongest arm and the sharpest sword, or the corruptest judge on his side. They are the prey of the mighty, and the prize of victorious villany; subject to be torn and ravished from him upon all occasions.

Nor has the providence of God thought it worth while to secure and protect the very best of men in their rights to any enjoyment under heaven; and all this, to depress and vilify these things in their thoughts; that so they may, every day, find a necessity of placing them above, and of bestowing their pains upon that which, if they pursue, they shall certainly obtain; and if they obtain, they shall impregably keep. "My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you," says our Saviour; "not as the world giveth, give I unto you." Why? What was the difference? He tells us in John xvi. 22, "Your joy no man taketh from you." It was such a joy or peace as was to be above the reach of either fraud or force, artifice or assault; which can never be said of an earthly enjoyment whatsoever, either as to the acquisition or possession of it. God having made no man any promise, that by all his virtue and innocence, all his skill and industry, he shall be able to continue in health, wealth, or honour; but that after his utmost endeavour to preserve those desirable things, he may, in the issue lose them all.

But God has promised and engaged to mankind, that whosoever shall faithfully and constantly persevere in the duties of a pious, Christian life, shall obtain "an eternal crown of glory," and "an inheritance, that fadeth not away." A man cannot, in-

deed, by all his piety secure his estate, but he may "make his calling and election sure;" which is infinitely and unspeakably more valuable, than all the estates, pleasures, and greatness of the world. For all these are without him, and consequently may be taken from him, and, which is yet worse, may do him no good even while they stay with him. But the conscience is a sure repository for a man to lodge and preserve his treasure in, and the chest of his own heart can never be forced open.

Now, the use and improvement of the foregoing particulars shall be briefly to convince us of the extreme vanity of most men's pretences to religion. A man's religion is all the claim he has to the felicities of another world: but can we think it possible in nature, for a man to place his greatest happiness where he does not place his strongest affections? How little is the other world in most men's thoughts, and yet they can have the confidence to pretend it to be the grand object of their desires! But why should men, in their greatest concern, be so false to their own experience, and those constant observations which they make of themselves in other matters? For let any man consult and ask his own heart, whether, having once fixed his love upon any thing or person, his thoughts are not always running after it? Strong love is a bias upon the thoughts; and for a man to love earnestly, and not to think almost continually of what he loves, is as impossible, as for him to live and not to breathe.

But besides this, we have shown several other marks and properties, by which men may infallibly judge of the truth and firmness of their love to God and to religion; as for instance, can they affirm religion to be that, which has got such hold of their hearts, that no time, cost, or labour shall be thought too much to be laid out upon it? Is it the prize they run for? Is it the thing they delight in? The thing with which, in all their distresses, they support and keep up their sinking spirits? And lastly, is it that which they value to such a degree, as to be willing to part with all the world, rather than lose or renounce it? These are great things, I confess, and yet nothing less will reach the measures of Christianity.

But the lives of men (unanswerable arguments in this case) are a sad demonstration, how few they are who come up to these terms. Men may, indeed, now and then bestow some scattering thoughts upon their souls and their future estate, provided they be at full leisure from their business and their sports (which they seldom or never are); and if, at any time, they should be so, this could amount to no more, than their being religious when they have nothing else to do. Likewise, when the solemn returns of God's public worship, and the law and custom of the nation shall call them off from their daily employments to better things, they may, perhaps, by a few devout looks and words, put on something of a holyday-dress for the present; which yet, like their Sunday-clothes, they are sure to lay aside again for the whole week after. All which, and a great deal

more, is far short of making religion a man's business; though yet if it be not so, it is in effect nothing.

And this men know well enough, when they are to deal in matters of this world, in which no pains nor importunity shall be thought too great, no attendance too servile, nothing, in a word, too hard to be done or suffered, either to recruit a broken fortune, or to regain a disgusted friend; though after all, should a man chance to recover both, he cannot be sure of keeping either. In like manner, let the trading person suffer any considerable damage in the stock with which he trades; what care, what parsimony, what art shall be used to make up the breach, and keep the shop still open? And the reason of all this is, because the man is in earnest in what he does, and accordingly acts as one who is so. Whereas, in men's spiritual affairs, look all the world over, and you shall every day see that the sins which wound, and waste, and make havoc of the conscience, which divide and cut it off from God, are committed easily, and passed over lightly, and owned confidently; with a bold front, and a brazen face, able to look the pillory itself out of countenance; nor does any one, almost, think himself so mortally struck, even by the foulest guilt, as to need the balsam of an immediate repentance, and a present suing out of pardon at the throne of grace. And yet, if a man dies, as to his temporal condition, poor and bankrupt, he is not at all the worse; but if he goes out of the world unreconciled to God, it had been good for him that he had never come into it. For what can it avail a man to pass from misery to misery, and to make one wretched life only a preparative to another?

In fine, this we may with great boldness venture to affirm, that if men would be at half the pains to provide themselves treasures in heaven, which they are generally at to get estates here on earth, it were impossible for any man to be damned. But when we come to earthly matters, we do; when to heavenly, we only discourse: heaven has our tongue and talk; but the earth our whole man besides.

Nevertheless, let men rest assured of this, that God has so ordered the great business of their eternal happiness, that their affections must still be the forerunners of their persons, the constant harbingers appointed by God to go and take possession of those glorious mansions for them; and consequently, that no man shall ever come to heaven himself, who has not sent his heart thither before him. For where this leads the way, the other will be sure to follow.

Now to him who alone is the great judge of hearts and rewarder of persons, be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

THE VIRTUOUS EDUCATION OF YOUTH THE SUREST IF NOT SOLE
WAY TO A HAPPY AND HONOURABLE OLD AGE.

DEDICATION.

TO

THE REVEREND, LEARNED, AND VERY WORTHY

DR. ROBERT FRIEND,

HEAD MASTER OF WESTMINSTER SCHOOL,

Together with the other subordinate Masters of the same; as likewise to all such as heretofore in their several times have been, and those who at present actually are, Members of that Royal Foundation, next in fame to its glorious foundress Queen Elizabeth; ROBERT SOUTH humbly dedicates this fifth volume* of his sermons, as standing for ever obliged by the most sacred ties of gratitude; and the work itself no less owing all that is valuable in it, (if any thing therein ought to be accounted really so,) to the author's education in that Seminary of learning, loyalty, and religion.

AN ADVERTISEMENT TO THE READER CONCERNING THE FOLLOWING SERMON.

WHOSOEVER shall judge it worth his time to peruse the following discourse, (if it meets with any such,) he is desired to take notice that it was penned and prepared to have been preached at Westminster Abbey, at a solemn meeting of such as had been bred at Westminster School. But the death of King Charles II. happening in the mean time, the design of this solemnity fell to the ground, together with him, and was never resumed since; though what the reason of this might be, I neither know nor ever thought it worth while to enquire. It being abundantly enough for me, that I can with great

* This refers to the twelve sermons next following.

truth affirm, that I never offered myself to this service, nor so much as thought of appearing in a post so manifestly above me ; but that a very great person⁻ (whose word was then law, as well as his profession) was pleased *mero motu* (to speak in the prerogative style, as best suiting so commanding a genius) to put this task upon me, as well as afterwards to supersede the performance of it: the much kinder act this of the two, I must confess, and that in more respects than one, as saving me the trouble of delivering, and at the same time blushing at so mean a discourse, and the congregation also the greater of hearing it. But what further cause there was or might be of so much uncertainty in this whole proceeding, I cannot tell ; unless possibly, that what his lordship as Chief Justice had determined, he thought fit as Chancellor to reverse.

Nevertheless, out of an earnest (and I hope very justifiable) desire, partly to pass a due encomium (or such a one at least as I am able) upon so noble a seat of the Muses, as this renowned school has been always accounted hitherto ; and partly to own the obligation and debt lying upon me to the place of my education, I have here at length presumed to publish it. So that, although neither at the time appointed for that solemn meeting, nor ever since, have I had any opportunity given me to preach this sermon myself ; yet now that it is printed, possibly some other may condescend to do it, as before, in several such cases, the like has been too well known to have been done.

* The Lord Jefferys.

SERMON XVII.

THE VIRTUOUS EDUCATION OF YOUTH, THE SUREST, IF NOT SOLE
WAY TO A HAPPY OLD AGE.

PROVERBS XXII. 6.

*Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will
not depart from it.*

WHEN I look back upon the old infamous rebellion and civil war of forty-one, which like an irresistible torrent broke in upon and bore down the whole frame of our government, both in church and state, together with the principal concerns of private families, and the personal interests of particular men (as it is not imaginable, that where a deluge overtops the mountains, it should spare the valleys); and when I consider also, how fresh all this is in the remembrance of many, and how frequent in the discourse of most, and in both carrying the same face of horror (as inseparable from such reflections); I have wondered with myself, and that even to astonishment, how it should be possible, that in the turn of so few years, there should be so numerous a party of men in these kingdoms, who (as if the remembrance of all those dismal days between forty and sixty were utterly erased out of the minds of men, and struck out of the annals of time) are still prepared and ready, nay, eager and impetuously bent to act over the same tragical scene again. Witness, first of all, the many virulent and base libels spread over the whole nation against the king and his government. And in the next place, the design of seizing his royal person, while the Parliament was held in Oxford in the year 1682. And likewise the Rye conspiracy, formed and intended for the assassination of the king, and of the duke his brother, in the year 1683. And lastly (though antecedent in time) the two famous city cavalcades* of clubmen in the two years of 1679 and 1680, countenanced and encouraged under that silly pretence of burning the pope, but carried on with so much insolence and audacious fury, and such an open barefaced contempt of all authority; as if the rabble had in plain terms bid the government do its worst, and touch or meddle with them if it durst. So hard has the experience of the world found it, for the pardon of a guilt (too big for the common measure of pardon) to

* R. C. said he had tossed up the ball, and his successor P. W. said he would keep it up. That is to say, Extortion began the dance, and Perjury would carry it on.

produce any thing better than the same practices which had been pardoned before.

But since nothing can happen without some cause or other, I have been further considering with myself what the cause of this terrible evil, which still looks so grim upon the government, should be. And to me it seems to be this; that as the forementioned rebellion and civil war brought upon the nation a general dissolution of order, and a corruption and debauchment of men's manners; so, the greatest part of the nation by much now alive, has been born, or at least bred since that fatal rebellion. For surely those who are now about or under fifty years of age, make a much greater number in the kingdom, than those who are above it; especially so much above it as to have passed their youth before the time of the late confusions; which have since so perfectly changed and new-modelled, or rather extinguished the morality, nay, the very natural temper of the English nation.

For this is certain, that wise and thinking men observe with sorrow, that the change is so very great and bad, that there is no relation in society or common life but has suffered and been the worse for it. For look into families, and you will find parents complaining, that their children pay them not that duty and reverence which they have heard and read that children used to show their parents heretofore. Masters also complain, that servants are neither so obedient nor so trusty as in former times. And lastly, for the conjugal relation (a thing of the greatest and most direct influence upon the weal or woe of societies, of any other thing in the world besides) it is but too frequent a complaint, that neither are men so good husbands, nor women so good wives, as they were before that accursed rebellion had made that fatal leading breach in the conjugal tie between the best of kings and the happiest of people. But now, how comes all this to pass? Why, from the exorbitant license of men's education. They were bred in lawless, ungoverned times, and conventicle fanatic academies, in defiance of the universities, and when all things were turned topsy-turvy, and the bonds of government quite loosed or broken asunder. So that as soon as they were able to observe any thing, the first thing which they actually did observe, were inferiors trampling upon their superiors; servants called by vote of parliament out of their masters' service to fight against their prince, and so to complete one rebellion with another; and women running in whole shoals to conventicles, to seek Christ forsooth, but to find somebody else. By which liberties having once leaped over the severity and strictness of former customs, they found it an easy matter, with debauched morals and deflowered consciences, to launch out into much greater. So that no wonder now, if in an age of a more grown and improved debauchery, you see men spending their whole time in taverns, and their lives in duels; inflaming themselves with wine, till they

come to pay the reckoning with their blood: and women spending both time and fortune, and perhaps their honour too, at balls, plays, and treats. The reason of all which is, that they are not now bred as they were heretofore: for that which was formerly their diversion only, is now their chief, if not sole business; and in case you would see or speak with them, you must not look for them at their own houses, but at the playhouse, if you would find them at home. They have quite cashiered the commandment which enjoins them six days' doing what they have to do, and substituted to themselves a new and very different one in the room of it; according to which, they are for six days to go to plays and to make visits, setting apart a seventh to go to church to see and to be seen. A blessed improvement doubtless, and such as the fops our ancestors (as some use to call them) were never acquainted with. And thus I have in some measure shown you the true grievance, which this poor and distracted kingdom groans under. A grievance (without the help of a vote) properly so called. A grievance springing from a boundless, immense, and absurd liberty. For though the zealous outcry and republican cant still used to join those two tinkling words *liberty* and *property* together (in a very different sense from what belonged to them), to make a rattle for the people; yet I am sure the intolerable excess of liberty has been the chief thing which has so much contributed to the curtailing their properties; the true, if not only cause, which of late years has made such numbers so troublesome to the government as they have been.

Well, but if it be our happiness that the mischief is become almost general, let us at least prevent the next degree of it, and keep it from being perpetual. And this is not to be done but by a remedy, which shall reach as far and deep as the distemper: for that began early, and therefore the cure must do so too, even from the childhood of the patient, and the infancy of the disease. There must be one *instauratio magna* of the methods and principles of education, and the youth of the nation, as it were, new cast into another and a better mould.

And for this we have the counsel and conduct of the wisest of men, Solomon himself; who knew no other course to ensure a growing flourishing practice of virtue, in a man's mature or declining age, but by planting it in his youth; as he that would have his grounds covered and loaded with fruit in autumn, must manure and dress them in the spring. "Train up a child," says he, "in the way that he should go:" the way, *non quâ itur, sed quâ eundum est*. Man is of an active nature, and must have a way to walk in, as necessarily as a place to breathe in. And several ways will be sure to offer themselves to his choice; and he will be as sure to choose one of them. His great concern is, that it be a safe one: since as the variety of them makes the choice difficult, so the illness of some of them must make it dan-

gerous. For, as the same Solomon tells us, "there is a way which seems right in a man's own eyes," when yet the tendency of it is fatal. An easy, pleasant, and a broad way, a way always thronged with passengers, but such that a man is never the safer for travelling in company. But this is not the way here chalked out to us. But rather a rugged, strait, and narrow way; and upon that account, the lesser, and consequently the younger any one is, the easier may he get into it, and pass through it. In a word, it is the path of virtue, and the high road to heaven, the *via ad bonos mores*; the entrance into which, some say, is never too late, and I am sure, can never be too soon. For it is certainly long and laborious; and therefore, whosoever hopes to reach the end of it, it will concern him to set out betimes; and his great encouragement so to do is, that this is the likeliest means to give him constancy and perseverance in it. "He will not," says Solomon, "forsake it when he is old;" and such is the length of the stage, that it will be sure to hold him in his course, and to keep him going on till he is grown so.

It is, in my opinion, very remarkable, that notwithstanding all the rewards which confessedly belong to virtue in both worlds, yet Solomon, in the text, alleges no other argument for or motive to the course here recommended to us, but the end of it: nor enjoins us the pursuit of virtue in our youth, upon any other reason mentioned in the words, but that we may practise it in our age. And no doubt it is an excellent one, and will have many others fall in with it, for the enforcement of the duty here prescribed to us.

For can any thing in nature be more odious and despicable than a wicked old man? A man, who after threescore or fourscore years spent in the world, after so many sacraments, sermons, and other means of grace, taken in, digested, and defeated, shall continue as errant a hypocrite, dissembler, and masquerader in religion as ever, still dodging and doubling with God and man; and never speaking his mind, nor so much as opening his mouth in earnest, but when he eats or breathes.

Again, can any thing be so vile and forlorn, as an old, broken, and decrepit sensualist, creeping, as it were, to the devil upon all four? Can there be a greater indecency, than an old drunkard? or any thing more noisome and unnatural, than an aged, silver-haired wanton, with frost in his bones, and snow upon his head, following his lewd, senseless amours? a wretch so scorned, so despised, and so abandoned by all, that his very vices forsake him.

And yet, as youth leaves a man, so age generally finds him; if he passes his youth, juggling, shuffling, and dissembling, it is odds but you will have him at the same legerdmain, and showing tricks in his age also. And if he spends his young days whoring and drinking, it is ten to one but age will find him in the same

filthy drudgery still, or at least wishing himself so. And lastly, if death (which cannot be far off from age) finds him so too, his game is then certainly at the best, and his condition (which is the sting of all) never possible to be better.

And therefore, whosoever thou art, who hast enslaved thyself to the paltry, bewitching pleasures of youth, and lookest with a wry face and a sour eye upon the rough, afflicting severities of virtue; consider with thyself, that the pleasures of youth will not, cannot be the pleasures of old age, though the guilt of it will. And consider also, what a dismal, intolerable thing it must needs be, for a man to feel a total declension in his strength, his morals, and his esteem together. And remember, that for all the disciplines of temperance, the hardships of labour, and the abridgments of thy swelling appetites, it will be a full, sufficient, and more than equivalent recompense, to be healthful, cheerful, and honourable, and (which is more than all) to be virtuous when thou art old.

The proposition then before us is this:

That a strict and virtuous education of youth, is absolutely necessary to a man's attainment of that inestimable blessing, that unspeakable felicity of being serviceable to his God, easy to himself, and useful to others, in the whole course of his following life.

In order to the proof of which, I shall lay down these six propositions.

First, That in the present state of nature, there is in every man a certain propensity to vice, or a corrupt principle more or less disposing him to evil: which principle is sometimes called the flesh, sometimes concupiscence, and sometimes sensuality, and makes one part of that which we call original sin. A principle which, though it both proceeds from sin and disposes to sin, yet, till it comes to act, the doctors of the Romish church deny to be in itself sinful. And the Pelagians deny that there is any such thing at all; especially our modern, orthodox, and more authentic Pelagians. For though our church indeed in her ninth article positively and expressly asserts both: yet there having been given us, not very long since, a new and more correct draught of discipline, to reconcile us to the schismatics, it is not impossible but that in time we may have a new draught of doctrine also, to reconcile us to the Socinians.

The second proposition is this, That the forementioned propensity of the sensual part, or principle, to vice, being left to itself, will certainly proceed to work, and to exert itself in action; and, if not hindered and counteracted, will continue so to do; till practice passes into custom or habit, and so by use and frequency comes to acquire a domineering strength in a man's conversation.

The third proposition is, That all the disorders of the world,

the confusions that disturb persons, families, and whole societies or corporations, proceed from this natural propensity to vice in particular persons, which being thus heightened by habitual practice, runs forth into those several sorts of vice which corrupt and spoil the manners of men. "Whence come wars and fightings?" says the apostle, James iv. 1; "Come they not hence, even from your lusts that war in your members?" And indeed, it is hard to assign any mischief befalling mankind, but what proceeds from some extravagance either of passion or desire, from lust or anger, covetousness or ambition.

The fourth proposition is, That when the corruption of men's manners, by the habitual improvement of this vicious principle, comes from personal to be general and universal, so as to diffuse and spread itself over a whole community; it naturally and directly tends to the ruin and subversion of the government where it so prevails: so that Machiavel himself (a person never likely to die for love of virtue or religion) affirms over and over in his political discourses upon Livy, "that where the manners of a people are generally corrupted, there the government cannot long subsist." I say, he affirms it as a stated, allowed principle; and I doubt not, but the destruction of governments may be proved and deduced from the general corruption of the subjects' manners, as a direct and natural cause thereof, by a demonstration as certain as any in the mathematics, though not so evident; for that, I confess, the nature of the thing may not allow.

The fifth proposition is, That this ill principle, which being thus habitually improved, and from personal corruptions spreading into general and national, is the cause of all the mischiefs and disorders, public and private, which trouble and infest the world, is to be altered and corrected only by discipline, and the infusion of such principles into the rational and spiritual part of man, as may powerfully sway his will and affections, by convincing his understanding that the practice of virtue is preferable to that of vice; and that there is a real happiness as well as honesty in the one, and a real misery as well as turpitude in the other; there being no mending or working upon the sensual part, but by well principling the intellectual.

The sixth and last proposition is, That this discipline and infusion of good principles into the mind, which only can and must work this great and happy change upon a man's morals, by counter-working that other sensual and vicious principle, which would corrupt them, can never operate so kindly, so efficaciously, and by consequence, so successfully, as when applied to him in his minority, while his mind is ductile and tender, and so ready for any good impression. For when he comes once to be in years, and his mind having been prepossessed with ill principles, and afterwards hardened with ill practices, grows callous, and scarce penetrable, his case will be then very different, and the success of such applications very doubtful, if not desperate.

Now the sum of these six propositions in short is this: That there is in every man naturally (as nature now stands) a sensual principle disposing him to evil. That this principle will be sure, more or less, to pass into action; and, if not hindered, to produce vicious habits and customs. That these vicious habits are the direct causes of all the miseries and calamities that afflict and disturb mankind. That when they come to spread so far, as from personal to grow national, they will weaken, and at length destroy governments. That this ill principle is controllable and conquerable only by discipline, and the infusion of good and contrary principles into the mind. And lastly that this discipline or infusion of good principles, is never like to have its full force, efficacy, and success, upon the minds of men, but during their youth.

Which whole deduction or chain of propositions proceeding upon so firm and natural, and withal so clear and evident a connexion of each proposition with the other; I suppose there can need no further demonstration to prove it as absolutely necessary, as the peace of mankind, public and private, can be, that the minds of youth should be formed and seasoned with a strict and virtuous, and early and preventing education.

Let us now in the next place see who they are, whose province it is to be so great a blessing to society, so vast a benefit to the world, as to be the managers of this important trust.

And we shall find that it rests upon three sorts of men, viz.

1. Parents; 2. Schoolmasters; and 3. The clergy; such especially as have cure of souls.

1. And first for parents. Let them endeavour to deserve that honour which God has commanded their children to pay them; and believe it, that must be by greater and better offices than barely bringing them into this world; which of itself puts them only in danger of passing into a worse. And as the good old sentence tells us, that it is better a great deal to be unborn, than either unbred, or bred amiss; so it cannot but be matter of very sad reflection to any parent, to think with himself, that he should be instrumental to give his child a body only to damn his soul. And therefore let parents remember, that as the paternal is the most honourable relation, so it is also the greatest trust in the world, and that God will be a certain and severe exactor of it; and the more so, because they have such mighty opportunities to discharge it, and that with almost infallible success. Forasmuch as a parent receives his child, from the hand of God and nature, a perfect blank, a mere *rasa tabula*, as to any guilt actually contracted by him, and consequently may write upon him what he pleases; having the unvaluable advantage of making the first impressions, which are of so strong and so prevailing an influence to determine the practice either to vice or virtue, that Buxtorf, in

the third chapter of his *Synagoga Judaica* tells us, that the Jewish fathers professedly take upon themselves the guilt of all their children's sins till they come to be thirteen years old; at which age the youth is called *filius præcepti*, as being then reckoned under the obligation of the law, and so by a solemn discharge left to sin for himself.

Now these and the like considerations, one would think, should remind parents, what a dreadful account lies upon them for their children; and that as their children, by the laws of God and man, owe them the greatest reverence; so there is a sort of reverence also, that they, as much, owe their children. A reverence that should make them not dare to speak a filthy word, or to do a base or an undecent action before them. What says our Saviour to this point? Matt. xviii. 6: "Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones, it were better for him, that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea." And surely he who teaches these little ones to offend God, offends them with a witness; indeed so unmercifully, that it would be much the less cruelty of the two, if the wretch their father should stab or stifle those poor innocents in their nurses' arms. For then he might damn himself alone, and not his children also; and himself, for his own sins only, and not for theirs too.

And therefore, with all imaginable concern of conscience, let parents make it their business to infuse into their children's hearts early and good principles of morality. Let them teach them from their very cradle to think and speak awfully of the great God, reverently of religion, and respectfully of the dispensers of it; it being no part of religion any where, but within the four seas, to despise and scoff at the ministers of it. But above all, next to their duty to God himself, let them be carefully taught their duty to their king; and not so much as to pretend to the fear of the one, without the honour of the other; let them be taught full and absolute (so far as legal) obedience and subjection to him (in all things lawful), the true and glorious characteristic of the church of England; for I know no church else, where you will be sure to find it. And to this end, let parents be continually instilling into their children's minds a mortal and implacable hatred of those twin plagues of Christendom, fanaticism and rebellion; which cannot be more compendiously, and withal more effectually done, than by displaying to them the late unparalleled rebellion, in its flaming and true colours.

For this was the method which God himself prescribed to his own people, to perpetuate the remembrance of any great and notable providence towards them; and particularly in the institution of the prime instance of their religion, the passover, Exod. xii. 26, 27: "And it shall come to pass, when your children

shall say unto you, What mean you by this service? that you shall say, It is the Lord's passover; who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our fathers," &c. So I say to all true English parents. When your children shall ask you, Why do you keep the thirtieth of January as a fast, and the twenty-ninth of May as a festival? What mean you by this service? Then is the time to rip up, and lay before them the tragical history of the late rebellion and unnatural civil war. A war commenced without the least shadow or pretence of right; as being notoriously against all law. A war begun without any provocation, as being against the justest, the mildest, and most pious prince that had ever reigned. A war raised upon clamours of grievances, while the subject swam in greater plenty and riches than had ever been known in these islands before; and no grievances to be found in the three kingdoms, besides the persons who cried out of them. Next to this, let them tell their children over and over, of the villanous imprisonments, and contumelious trial, and the barbarous murder of that blessed and royal martyr, by a company of cobblers, tailors, draymen, drunkards, whoremongers, and broken tradesmen; though since, I confess, dignified with the title of the sober part of the nation: these, I say, were the illustrious judges of that great monarch. Whereas the whole people of England, nobles and commons together, neither in parliament, nor out of parliament, as that great judge* in the trial of the regicides affirmed, had power by law to touch one hair of his head, or judicially to call him to account for any of his actions. And then in the last place, they are to tell their children also of the base and brutish cruelties practised by those bloodhounds in the plunders, sequestrations, decimations, and murders of their poor fellow-subjects: likewise of their horrid oaths, covenants, and perjuries; and of their shameless, insatiable, and sacrilegious avarice, in destroying the purest church in the world, and seizing its revenues: and all this under the highest pretences of zeal for religion, and with the most solemn appeals to the great God, while they were actually spitting in his face.

These things, I say, and a thousand more, they are to be perpetually inculcating into the minds of their children, according to that strict injunction of God himself to the Israelites, Deut. vi. 6, 7, 8: "These words shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt diligently teach them thy children, and shalt talk of them, when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Such discourses should open their eyes in the morning, and close them in the evening. And I dare undertake, that if this one thing had been faithfully and constantly practised, even but since the late restoration (which came upon these poor kingdoms like life

* Sir Orlando Bridgman, lord chief baron.

from the dead), the fanatics had never been so considerable, as to cause those terrible convulsions in church and state, and those misunderstandings between the king and his people, which we have seen and trembled at, and must expect to see as long as the same spirit, which governed in forty-one, continues still so powerful as it does amongst us. For I am sure no king and that can ever reign quietly together.

But some, perhaps, may here very sagely object,—Is not this the way to sour and spoil the minds of children, by keeping the remembrance of the late rebellion always fresh upon them? I answer, No; no more than to warn them against poisons, pits, and precipices, is likely to endanger their lives; or to tell them by what ill courses men come to the gallows is the ready way to bring them thither. No; nothing can be too much hated by children, which cannot be too much avoided by men. And since vice never loses its hold, where it keeps its reputation, the minds of youth can never be sufficiently fortified against villanous and base actions, but by a deep and early abhorrence, caused by a faithful representation of them. So preposterous a method will it be found to bring a crime out of fashion, by making panegyrics upon the criminal.

In short, let parents prevent and seize the very first notions and affections of their children, by engaging them, from the very first, in a hatred of rebellion; and that, if possible, as strong as nature, as irreconcilable as antipathy; and so early, that they themselves may not remember when it began, but that, for ought they know, it was even born with them. Let them, I say, be made almost from their very cradles to hate it, name and thing; so that their blood may rise and their heart may swell at the very mention of it. In a word, let them by a kind of preventing instinct abhor it, even in their minority, and they will be sure to find sufficient reason for that abhorrence, when they shall come to maturity. And so much for parents.

2. The second sort of persons entrusted with the training up of youth are schoolmasters. I know not how it comes to pass that this honourable employment should find so little respect (as experience shows it does) from too many in the world. For there is no profession which has or can have a greater influence upon the public. Schoolmasters have a negative upon the peace and welfare of the kingdom. They are indeed the great depositaries and trustees of the peace of it; as having the growing hopes and fears of the nation in their hands. For generally subjects are and will be such as they breed them. So that I look upon an able, well-principled schoolmaster as one of the most meritorious subjects in any prince's dominions that can be; and every such school under such a master, as a seminary of loyalty and a nursery of allegiance.

Nay, I take schoolmasters to have a more powerful influence

upon the spirits of men than preachers themselves. Forasmuch as they have to deal with younger and tenderer minds, and consequently have the advantage of making the first and deepest impressions upon them. It being seldom found, that the pulpit mends what the school has marred; any more than a fault in the first concoction is ever corrected by the second.

But now, if their power is so great and their influence so strong, surely it concerns them to use it to the utmost for the benefit of their country. And for this purpose, let them fix this as an eternal rule or principle in the instruction of youth: that care is to be had of their manners in the first place, and of their learning in the next. And here, as the foundation and groundwork of all morality, let youth be taught betimes to obey, and to know that the very relation between teacher and learner imports superiority and subjection. And therefore, let masters be sure to inure young minds to an early awe and reverence of government, by making the first instance of it in themselves, and maintaining the authority of a master over them sacred and inviolable; still remembering, that none is or can be fit to be a teacher, who understands not how to be a master. For every degree of obstinacy in youth is one step to rebellion. And the very same restive humour which makes a young man slight his master in the school, and despise his tutor in the university (a thing lately much in fashion), will make him fly in his prince's face in the parliament house. Of which, not many years since, we have had some scurvy experiments.

There is a principle of pride universally wrapped up in the corrupt nature of man. And pride is naturally refractory and impatient of rule; and (which is most material to our present case) it is a vice which works and puts forth betimes; and consequently must be encountered so too, or it will quickly carry too high a head, or too stiff a neck to be controlled. It is the certain companion of folly; and both of them the proper qualifications of youth; it being the inseparable property of that age to be proud and ignorant, and to despise instruction the more it needs it. But both of them are nuisances which education must remove, or the person is lost.

And it were to be wished, I confess, that the constitution of man's nature were such that this might be done only by the mild addresses of reason and the gentle arts of persuasion; and that the studies of humanity might be carried on only by the ways of humanity: but unless youth were all made up of goodness and ingenuity, this is a felicity not to be hoped for. And therefore it is certain, that in some cases, and with some natures, austerity must be used: there being too frequently such a mixture in the composition of youth, that while the man is to be instructed, there is something of the brute also to be chastised.

But how to do this discreetly, and to the benefit of him who is so unhappy as to need it, requires, in my poor opinion, a greater

skill, judgment, and experience, than the world generally imagines, and than, I am sure, most masters of schools can truly pretend to be masters of. I mean those *plagosi Orbili*, those executioners, rather than instructors of youth; persons fitter to lay about them in a coach or cart, or to discipline boys before a Spartan altar, or rather upon it, than to have any thing to do in a Christian school. I would give those pedagogical Jehus, those furious school-drivers, the same advice which the poet says Phœbus gave his son Phaëton (just such another driver as themselves), that he should *parcere stimulis* (the *stimulus* in driving being of the same use formerly that the *lash* is now). Stripes and blows are the last and basest remedy, and scarce ever fit to be used, but upon such as carry their brains in their backs; and have souls so dull and stupid, as to serve for little else but to keep their bodies from putrefaction.

Nevertheless, since (as I have shown) there are some cases and tempers which make these boisterous applications necessary; give me leave, for once, to step out of my profession so far (though still keeping strictly within my subject), as to lay before the educators of youth these few following considerations; for I shall not, in modesty, call them instructions.

(1.) As first, let them remember that excellent and never to be forgotten advice, that 'boys will be men;' and that the memory of all base usage will sink so deep into, and grow up so inseparably with them, that it will not be so much as in their own power ever to forget it. For though indeed schoolmasters are a sort of kings, yet they cannot always pass such acts of oblivion as shall operate upon their scholars, or perhaps, in all things, indemnify themselves.

(2.) Where they find a youth of spirit, let them endeavour to govern that spirit without extinguishing it; to bend it, without breaking it; for when it comes once to be extinguished, and broken, and lost, it is not in the power or art of man to recover it; and then (believe it) no knowledge of nouns and pronouns, syntaxis and prosodia, can ever compensate or make amends for such a loss. The French, they say, are extremely happy at this, who will instruct a youth of spirit to a decent boldness, tempered with a due modesty; which two qualities in conjunction, do, above all others, fit a man both for business and address. But for want of this art, some schools have ruined more good wits than they have improved; and even those which they have sent away with some tolerable improvement, like men escaped from a shipwreck, carry off only the remainder of those natural advantages, which in much greater plenty they first brought with them.

(3.) Let not the chastisement of the body be managed so as to make a wound which shall rankle and fester in the very soul. That is, let not children, whom nature itself would bear up by an innate, generous principle of emulation, be exposed, cowed,

and depressed with scoffs and contumelies (founded perhaps upon the master's own guilt) to the scorn and contempt of their equals and emulators. For this is, instead of rods, to chastise them with scorpions; and is the most direct way to stupify and besot, and make them utterly regardless of themselves, and of all that is praiseworthy: besides that it will be sure to leave in their minds such inward regrets, as are never to be qualified or worn off. It is very undecent for a master to jest or play with his scholars; but not only undecent, but very dangerous too, in such a way to play upon them.

(4.) And lastly, let it appear in all acts of penal animadversion, that the person is loved while his fault is punished; nay, that one is punished only out of love to the other. And (believe it) there is hardly any one so much a child, but has sagacity enough to perceive this. Let no melancholy fumes, and spites, and secret animosities pass for discipline. Let the master be as angry for the boy's fault, as reason will allow him; but let not the boy be in fault, only because the master has a mind to be angry. In a word, let not the master have the spleen, and the scholars be troubled with it. But above all, let not the sins, or faults, or wants of the parents be punished upon the children; for that is a prerogative which God has reserved to himself.

These things I thought fit to remark about the education and educators of youth in general, not that I have any thoughts or desires of invading their province; but possibly a stander by may sometimes look as far into the game as he who plays it; and perhaps with no less judgment, because with much less concern.

3. The third and last sort of persons concerned in the great charge of instructing youth are the clergy. For as parents deliver their children to the schoolmaster, so the schoolmaster delivers them to the minister. And for my own part, I never thought a pulpit, a cushion, and an hour-glass, such necessary means of salvation, but that much of the time and labour which is spent about them, might be much more profitably bestowed in catechising youth from the desk: preaching being a kind of spiritual diet, upon which people are always feeding, but never full; and many poor souls, God knows, too, too like Pharaoh's lean kine, much the leaner for their full feed.

And how for God's sake should it be otherwise! For to preach to people without principles, is to build where there is no foundation, or rather where there is not so much as ground to build upon. But people are not to be harangued, but catechised into principles; and this is not the proper work of the pulpit, any more than threshing can pass for sowing. Young minds are to be leisurely formed and fashioned with the first plain, simple, and substantial rudiments of religion. And to expect that this should be done by preaching or force of lungs, is just as if a smith or artist who

works in metal, should think to frame and shape out his work only with his bellows.

It is want of catechising which has been the true cause of those numerous sects, schisms, and wild opinions, which have so disturbed the peace, and bid fair to destroy the religion of the nation. For the consciences of men have been filled with wind and noise, empty notions and pulpit tattle. So that amongst the most seraphical *illuminati*, and the highest puritan perfectionists, you shall find people of fifty, threescore, and fourscore years old, not able to give that account of their faith, which you might have had heretofore of a boy of nine or ten. Thus far had the pulpit (by accident) disordered the church, and the desk must restore it. For you know the main business of the pulpit in the late times (which we are not thoroughly recovered from yet, and perhaps never shall), was to please and pamper a proud, senseless humour, or rather a kind of spiritual itch, which had then seized the greatest part of the nation, and worked chiefly about their ears; and none were so overrun with it, as the holy sisterhood, the daughters of Sion, and the matrons of the new Jerusalem (as they called themselves). These brought with them ignorance and itching ears in abundance; and Holderforth equalled them in one, and gratified them in the other. So that whatsoever the doctrine was, the application still ran on the surest side; for to give those doctrine and use-men, those pulpit-engineers, their due, they understood how to plant their batteries, and to make their attacks perfectly well; and knew that by pleasing the wife, they should not fail to preach the husband in their pocket. And therefore to prevent the success of such pious frauds for the future, let children be well principled, and, in order to that, let them be carefully catechised.

Well; but when they are thus catechised, what is to be done next? Why then let them be brought to the bishop of the diocese to be confirmed by him, since none else, no, not all the presbyters of a diocese (nor Presbyterians neither) can perform this apostolical act and office upon them. For though indeed a bishop may be installed, and visit, and receive his revenues too, by deputation or proxy; yet I am sure he can no more confirm than ordain by proxy: these being acts purely and incommunicably episcopal.

The church of Rome makes confirmation a sacrament; and though the church of England does not affirm it to be such, yet it owns it of divine and apostolical institution. And as to the necessity of it, I look upon it as no less than a completion of baptism in such as outlive their childhood; and for that cause called by the ancients *τελειωσις*. It is indeed a man's owning that debt in person, which passed upon him in his baptism by representation; and his ratifying the promises of his sureties, by his personal acknowledgment of the obligation.

It is also expressly instituted for the collation of those peculiar assistances and gifts of the Spirit, by the imposition of episcopal hands, which the rubric represents as requisite, to bear him through his Christian course and conflict with comfort and success. For till a person be confirmed, he cannot regularly and ordinarily partake of that high and soul-supporting ordinance, the sacrament of the Lord's supper. And these are the considerations which render the confirmation of children necessary, and the neglect of it scandalous, unchristian, and utterly unjustifiable upon any account whatsoever. For is there so much as the least shadow of excuse alleageable for parents not bringing their children to the bishop to be confirmed by him? or for the bishop not to confirm them when duly brought? The chief and general failure in this duty is no doubt chargeable upon the former; the grand rebellion of forty-one, and the dissolution of all church order thereupon, absolutely unhinging the minds of most of the nation, as to all concern about religion; nevertheless, if on the other side also, both the high importance of the ordinance itself, and the vast number of the persons whom it ought to pass upon, be duly pondered, it will be found next, at least, to a necessity (if at all short of it) that there should be episcopal visitations more than once in three years, if it were only for the sake of confirmations; especially since the judges of the land think it not too much for them to go two circuits yearly. And some are apt to think that no less care and labour ought to be employed in carrying on the discipline of the gospel, than in dispensing the benefits of the law. For certainly the importance of the former, with those who think men's souls ought to be regarded in the first place, is noways inferior to that of the latter; at least many wise and good men of the clergy, as well as others (who hope they may lawfully wish what they pretend not to prescribe) have thought the proposal not unreasonable. For confirmation being (as we hinted before) the only proper, regular inlet, or rather authentic ticket of admission to the Lord's supper, and yet withal the sole act of the bishop; if people who desire to obtain it should find that they cannot, would they not be apt to think themselves hardly dealt with, that when Christ has frankly invited them to his table, they should, for want of confirmation, find the door shut against them when they come?

Besides that nothing can be imagined more for the episcopal dignity and preeminence, than that, after Christ has thus prepared this heavenly feast for us, he yet leaves it to his bishops (by lodging this confirming power in their hands) to qualify and put us into a regular capacity of appearing at that divine banquet, and of being welcome when we are there. And therefore, **in short**, since the power of confirming, no less than that of **ordaining** itself, is (as we have shown) so peculiar to the episcopal character, as to be also personal and incommunicable; all

well-wishers to the happy estate of the church must needs wish, that, as the laws of it have put a considerable restraint upon unlimited ordinations, so they would equally enforce the frequency of confirmations; since a defect or desuetude of these latter must no less starve the altar, than a superfluity of the former overstock the church: both of them, I am sure, likely to prove fatal to it.

But to proceed; as the minister, having sufficiently catechised the youth of his parish, ought to tender them to the bishop to be confirmed by him; and the bishop, for his part, to give his clergy as frequent opportunities of doing so as possibly he can; so after they are thus confirmed, he is to take them into the further instructions of his ministry, and acquaint them with what they have been confirmed in. And here, the better to acquit himself in this important trust, let him take a measure of what good the pulpit may do, by the mischief which it has already done. For, in the late times of confusion, it was the pulpit which supplied the field with swordsmen, and the parliament house with incendiaries. And let every churchman consider, that it is one of the principal duties of the clergy to make the king's government easy to him, and prepare him a willing and obedient people. For which purpose, the canons of our church enjoin every minister of it to preach obedience and subjection to the government, four times a year at least. And this, I am sure, cannot be better and more effectually done, than by representing the faction which troubles and undermines it as odious, ridiculous, and unexcusable, as, with truth, he can; and by exposing those villanous tricks and intrigues, by which they supplanted and overturned the monarchy under king Charles I. and would have done the same again under king Charles II., though he had obliged them by a mercy not to be paralleled, and an oblivion never to be forgot.

Let every faithful minister therefore of the church of England, in a conscientious observance of the laws laid upon him by the said church, make it his business to undeceive and disabuse the people committed to his charge, by giving them to understand, that most of that noise which they have so often heard ringing in their ears, about grievances and arbitrary power, popery and tyranny, persecution and oppression of tender consciences, court-pensioners, and the like, has been generally nothing else but mere flam and romance; and that there is no kingdom or government in Christendom less chargeable with any of these odious things and practices than the English government, under his present majesty, both is and ever has been; and consequently, that all these clamours are only the artifices of some malcontents and ambitious demagogues, to fright their prince to compound with them, by taking them off (as the word is) with great and gainful places; and therefore,

that they bark so loud, and open their mouths so wide, for no other cause than that some preferment may stop them: the common method, I own, by which weak governors and governments use to deal with such as oppose them; till, in the issue, by strengthening their enemies, they come to ruin themselves, and to be laughed at for their pains. For that governor, whosoever he is, who prefers his enemy, makes him thereby not at all the less an enemy, but much more formidably so than he was before.

And whereas yet further, there have been such vehement invectives against court-pensioners; let the people, who have been so warmly plied with this stuff, be carefully informed, that those very men, who raise and spread these invectives, do not indeed (as they pretend) hate pensioners so much, but that they love pensions more; and have no other quarrel to them, but that any should be thought worthy to receive them but themselves.

And then, as for the next clamour, about the persecution and oppression of tender consciences; let every conscientious preacher thoroughly and impartially instruct his congregation, that there is no such thing; that from the very restoration of the king, they have been all along allowed (and that by a law made for that purpose) to worship God after their own way in their own families, with five more persons besides: so that all the oppression and persecution of these men amounts but to this, that the government will not suffer them to meet in troops, regiments, and brigades; and so form themselves into an army, and under colour of worshipping God, to muster their forces, and show the government how ready they are, when occasion serves, for a battle: so that in truth it is not so much liberty of conscience, as liberty from conscience, which these men contend for. Likewise let the faithful minister teach his people that, as the main body of the nation hates and abhors popery with the utmost aversion; so that old stale pretence of the danger of its being every day ready to return and break in upon us, while this general aversion to it continues, and the laws against it stand in full force (as at present they certainly do), is all of it, from top to bottom, **nothing** else but an arrant trick and term of art, and a republican engine to rob the church, and run down the clergy (the surest **bulwark** against popery); as the very same plea had effectually served them for the same purpose once before. And lastly, let the youth of the nation be made to know, that all the bustle and stir made by schismatics and dissenters against the rites and ceremonies of the church of England (which after so much noise are but three in number, and those not only very innocent, but very rational too), has been intended only for a blind and a cheat upon those lamentable tools, the unthinking rabble, whom these leading impostors are still managing and despising at the same time. For can any man of sense imagine, that those whose conscience could serve them to murder their

king, (and him the most innocent and pious of kings,) do or can really scruple the use of the surplice, the cross in baptism, or kneeling at the sacrament? Alas! they have a cormorant in their conscience which can swallow all this, and a great deal more. But the thing they drive at by this noisy, restless cant, is to get the power and revenues of the church into their comprehensive clutches; and according to a neighbouring pattern, having first possessed themselves of the church, to make their next inroads upon the state. I say it is power and wealth, and nothing else, which these pretenders design and push so hard for; and when they have once compassed it, you shall quickly see how effectually these men of mortification will mortify all who differ from them; and how little favour and indulgence they will show those who had showed them so much before. Such is the cruelty and ingratitude of the party.

All which, and the like important heads of discourse, so nearly affecting not only the common interest, but the very vitals of the government, had the parochial clergy frequently and warmly insisted upon to their respective congregations, and to the younger part of them especially; such a course could not but, in a short time, have unpoisoned their perverted minds, and rectified their false notions to such a degree, as would, in all likelihood, have prevented those high animosities, those divisions and discontents, which have given such terrible shocks both to church and state, since the late happy, but never yet duly improved restoration.

And now I must draw towards a close, though I have not despatched the tenth part of what I had to say upon this useful, copious, and indeed inexhaustible subject. And therefore for a conclusion, I have only two things more to add, and by way of request to you, great men; you who are persons of honour, power, and interest in the government; and, I hope, will show to what great and good purposes you are so.

1. And the first is, that you would employ the utmost of this your power and interest, both with the king and parliament, to suppress, utterly to suppress and extinguish, those private, blind, conventicling schools or academies of grammar and philosophy, set up and taught secretly by fanatics, here and there all the kingdom over. A practice which, I will undertake to prove, look with a more threatening aspect upon the government, than any one fanatical or republican encroachment made upon it besides. For this is the direct and certain way to bring up and perpetuate a race of mortal enemies both to church and state. To derive, propagate, and immortalize the principles and practices of forty-one to posterity, is schism and sedition for ever, faction and rebellion *in sæcula sæculorum*; which I am sure no honest English heart will ever say Amen to. We have, I own, laws against conventicles; but believe it, it would be but labour in

vain to go about to suppress them, while these nurseries of disobedience are suffered to continue. For those first and early aversions to the government, which these shall infuse into the minds of children, will be too strong for the strongest after-convictions which can pass upon them when they are men. So that what these underground workers have once planted a briar, let no governor think that by all the arts of clemency and condescension, or any other cultivation whatsoever, he shall be able to change into a rose. Our ancestors, to their great honour, rid the nation of wolves, and it were well, if (notwithstanding their sheep's clothing) the church could be rid of them too; but that neither will nor can ever be, so long as they shall be suffered to breed up their litters amongst us. Good God! can all history show us any church or state since the creation, that has been able to settle or support itself by such methods? I can, I thank God, (looking both him and my conscience in the face) solemnly and seriously affirm, that I abhor every thing like cruelty to men's persons, as much as any man breathing does or can; but for all that, the government must not be ruined, nor private interests served to the detriment of the public, though upon the most plausible pretence whatsoever. And therefore it will certainly concern the whole nobility, gentry, and all the sober commonalty of the nation, for the sake of God, their prince, their country, and their own dear posterity, to lay this important matter to heart. For unless these lurking subterraneous nests of disloyalty and schism* be utterly broken up and dismantled, all that the power and wit of man can do to secure the government against that faction, which once destroyed it, will signify just nothing. It will be but as the pumping of a leaky vessel, which will be sure to sink for all that, when the devouring element is still soaking and working in a hundred undiscerned holes, while it is cast out only at one.

2. My other request to you, great men, is, that you would, in your respective stations, countenance all legal, allowed, free grammar schools, by causing (as much as in you lies) the youth of the nation to be bred up there, and no where else: there being sometimes, and in some respects, as much reason why parents should not breed, as why they should not baptize their children at home.

But chiefly, and in the first place, let your kind and generous influences upon all occasions descend upon this royal and illustrious school, the happy place of your education. A school, which neither disposes men to division in church, nor sedition in state; though too often found the readiest way (for churchmen especially) to thrive by; but trains up her sons and scholars to an invincible loyalty to their prince, and a strict, impartial conformity to the church. A school so untaintedly loyal, that I can truly and knowingly aver, that in the

* The reader is desired to cast his eye upon a printed piece, entitled, *A Letter from a Country Divine to his Friend in London, concerning the education of the Dissenters, in their private academies, in several parts of this nation; humbly offered to the consideration of the grand committee of Parliament for religion, now sitting.* Printed at London for Robert Clavell in St. Paul's Church-yard, 1703.

very worst of times (in which it was my lot to be a member of it) we really were king's scholars, as well as called so. Nay, upon that very day, that black and eternally infamous day of the king's murder, I myself heard, and am now a witness, that the king was publicly prayed for in this school, but an hour or two (at most) before his sacred head was struck off. And this loyal genius always continued amongst us, and grew up with us; which made that noted corypheus* of the Independent faction (and some time after, viz. 1651, promoted by Cromwell's interest to the deanery of Christ Church in Oxford) often say, "that it would never be well with the nation, till this school was suppressed; for that it naturally bred men up to an opposition to the government." And so far indeed he was in the right: for it did breed up people to an opposition to that government, which had opposed and destroyed all governments besides itself; nay, and even itself too at last; which was the only good thing it ever did. But if, in those days, some four or five bred up in this school (though not under this master) did unworthily turn aside to other byways and principles, we can however truly say this of them, that though "they went out from us, yet they were never of us." For still the school itself made good its claim to that glorious motto of its royal foundress, *Semper eadem*; the temper and genius of it being neither to be corrupted with promises nor controlled with threats.

For though, indeed, we had some of those fellows for our governors (as they called themselves), yet thanks be to God, they were never our teachers; no, not so much as when they would have perverted us from the pulpit. I myself, while a scholar here, have heard a prime preacher† of those times thus addressing himself from this very pulpit, to the leading grandees of the faction in the pew under it: "You stood up," says he, "for your liberties, and you did well." And what he meant by their liberties, and what by their standing up for them, I suppose needs no explication. But though our ears were still encountered with such doctrines in the church, it was our happiness to be taught other doctrine in the school; and what we drank in there, proved an effectual antidote against the poison prepared for us here.‡

And therefore, as Alexander the Great admonished one of his soldiers (of the same name with himself) still to remember that his name was Alexander, and to behave himself accordingly; so, I hope, our school has all along behaved itself suitably to the royal name and title which it bears; and that it will make the same august name, the standing rule of all its actings and proceedings for ever: still remembering with itself that it is called the king's school, and therefore let nothing arbitrary or tyrannical be practised in it, whatsoever has been practised against it. Again, it is the king's school, and therefore let nothing but what is loyal come out of it, or be

* Dr. John Owen.

† Mr. William Strong.

‡ Viz. Westminster Abbey, where this sermon was appointed to have been preached.

found in it ; let it be not so much as tinctured with any thing which is either republican or fanatical : that so the whole nation may have cause to wish, that the king may never want such a school, nor the nation may ever want such a king. A prince, great in every thing which deserves to be accounted great ; a prince, who has some of all the Christian royal blood in Europe running in his veins ; so that to be a prince, is only another word for being of kin to him : who, though he is the princely centre of so many royal lines, meeting in his illustrious person, is yet greater for his qualifications, than for his extraction ; and upon both accounts much likelier to be envied, than equalled by any or all the princes about him. In a word, and to conclude all ; a prince so deservedly dear to such as truly love their country and the prosperity of it, that, could it be warrantable to pray for the perpetuity of his life amongst us, and reign over us, we could not do it in words more proper and significant for that purpose, than that God would vouchsafe to preserve the one, and continue the other, till we should desire to see a change of either.

To which God, the great King of kings, and Lord of lords, be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON XVIII.

PRETENCE OF CONSCIENCE NO EXCUSE FOR REBELLION.

[Preached before King Charles the Second, at his Chapel at Whitehall, on January 30, 1662-3; being the anniversary of the execrable murder of the late King Charles the First, of glorious Memory.]

TO THE ILLUSTRIOUS, BLESSED, AND NEVER-DYING MEMORY

OF

CHARLES THE FIRST,

KING OF GREAT BRITAIN, FRANCE, AND IRELAND, DEFENDER OF THE FAITH, &c.

Causelessly rebelled against, unhumanly imprisoned, and at length barbarously murdered before the gates of his own palace, by the worst of men, and the most obliged of subjects.

JUDGES XIX. 30.

And it was so, that all that saw it said, There was no such deed done or seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day: consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds.

THE occasion of these words was a foul and detestable fact, which had happened in one of the tribes of Israel; and the occasion of that fact was (as the text not obscurely intimates) the want of kingly government amongst the Israelites at that time: it being noted as a thing of particular remark in Judges xxi. 25, that this villany was committed, when "there was no king in Israel;" and when (as a natural consequent thereof) men resolved to live at large; every one, without check or control, doing, as the text tells us, "what was right in his own eyes;" or (according to the more sanctified language of our later times) "as the Spirit moved him." Such a liberty of conscience, it seems, had they then got, for serving the devil after his and their own way.

As for the infamous actors in this tragical scene, we have them boldly owning their shameless fact in open field, avowing it with sword in hand; and for some time defending the same with victory and success against their brethren, then the peculiar people and church of God, twice routed and slaughtered before them in a righteous cause; a cause managed by all the rest of the tribes engaged in it, and that not more with the proper arms of

war in one hand, than with a commission from God himself in the other. In which and the like respects, so great a resemblance must needs be acknowledged between this and the late civil war amongst ourselves here in England; that the proceedings of forty-one and some of the following years, may well pass for the devil's works in a second edition, or a foul and odious copy, much exceeding the foulness of the original.

I profess not myself either skilled or delighted in mystical interpretations of scripture; nor am I for forcing or wiredrawing the sense of the text, so as to make it designedly foretell the king's death and murder; nor to make England, Scotland, and Ireland (as some enthusiasts have done) the adequate scene for the prophetic spirit to declare future events upon; as if, forsooth, there could not be so much as a few houses fired, a few ships taken, or any other calamitous accident befall this little corner of the world, but that some apocalyptic ignoramus or other must presently find and pick it out of some abused, martyred prophecy of Ezekiel, Daniel, or the Revelation. No, I pretend not to any such illuminations. I am neither prophet, nor prophetic prelate, but account it enough for my purpose, if I can bring my present business and the text together, not by design, but accommodation; and as the words themselves are very apposite and expressive, so I doubt not but to find such a parallel in the things expressed by them, that it may be a question, whether the subject of the text, or of this mournful day, may have a better claim to the expression.

The crime here set off with such high aggravations, was an injury done to one single Levite, in the villanous rape of his concubine; a surprising passage, I confess, to us, who have lived in times enlightening men to the utmost hatred and contempt of the ministry, as a principal part (or rather whole) of their religion: nevertheless we see how, even in those dark times of the law (as our late saints used to call them), the resentment of the wrong done to this poor Levite rose so high, that it was looked upon as a sufficient ground for a civil war; and accordingly made the concern of all Israel to revenge this quarrel upon the whole tribe of Benjamin, for abetting the villany. This was the unanimous judgment of the eleven tribes, and a war was hereupon declared; in which the conduct and preeminence was by divine designation appointed to the royal tribe of Judah; the sceptre being judged by God himself most concerned to assert the privileges of, and revenge the injuries done the crosier; the crown to support the mitre; and in a word, the sovereign authority to vindicate and abet the sacerdotal, as well as to be blessed by it.

But now, to come to the counterpart of the story, or the application of it to our present case. He who dates the murder of king Charles the First from the fatal blow given upon the scaffold, judges like him who thinks that it is only the last stroke

which fells the tree. No, the killing of his person was but the consummation of the murder first begun in his prerogative; and Pym, and some like him, did as really give a stroke towards the cutting down this royal oak, as Ireton or Cromwell himself. Few, I believe, but have heard of that superfine, applauded invention of theirs, of a double capacity in the king, personal and political. And, I suppose, the two noted factions, which then carried all before them, distinguished in him these two, that so to keep pace with one another, each of them might destroy him under one.

For as for those* whose post-dated loyalty now consists only in decrying that action, which had been taken out of their hands by others more cunning, though no less wicked than themselves; who having laid the premises, afterwards ridiculously protest against the conclusion; they do but cover their prevarication with a fig-leaf, there being no more difference between both parties, but only this, that the former used all their art, skill, and industry to give these infamous contrivers of this murder the best colour and disguise they could; whereas their younger brother, the Independent, thought it the safest and surest way, to disguise only the executioner.

Well then, when a long sunshine of mercy had ripened the sins of the nation, so that it was now ready for the shakings of divine vengeance, the seeds of faction and rebellion having for a long time been studiously sowed by seditious libels, and well watered with schismatical lectures; the first assault was made against the clergy, by a pack of inveterate avowed enemies to the church, the fury of whose lust and ambition nothing could allay, but a full power and liberty (which they quickly got) to seize her privileges, prostitute her honours, and ravish her revenues; till at length, being thus mangled, divided, and broken in pieces (as the Levite's concubine was before her), she became a ghastly spectacle to all beholders, to all the Israel of God.

Such therefore was then the woeful condition of our church and clergy, upon the puritans' invasion of their rights, at the breaking out of the late civil war. In which (as we hinted before in the Levite's case) so amongst ourselves also, the cause of our oppressed church was owned and sheltered by the royal standard, and the defence of the ministry (as most properly it should be), managed by the defender of the faith. But, alas! the same angry Providence still pursuing the best of kings and causes with defeat after defeat, the lion falling before the wolf, as Judah (the royal tribe) sometimes did before Benjamin, the king himself came to be in effect first unkinged, and all his royalties torn from him, before the year forty-five; and then at last, to complete the whole tragedy in his person, as well as office, Charles was murdered in forty-eight.

* The Presbyterian faction.

And this is the black subject and occasion of this day's solemnity. In my reflections upon which, if a just indignation, or indeed even a due apprehension of the blackest fact which the sun ever saw since he hid his face upon the crucifixion of our Saviour, chance to give an edge to some of my expressions, let all such know, the guilt of whose actions has made the very strictest truths look like satires or sarcasms, and bare descriptions sharper than invectives; I say, let such censurers (whose innocence lies only in their indemnity) know, that to drop the blackest ink and the bitterest gall upon this fact, is not satire, but propriety.

And now, since the text here represents the whole matter set forth in it, in these most significant and remarkable words, that "there was no such deed done or seen" for many ages before; and with which words I shall clothe the sad subject before us; I conceive the most proper prosecution thereof, as applied to this occasion, will be to show wherein the unparalleled strangeness of this deed consists. And for this, since the nature is not to be accounted for, but from a due consideration of the agent, the object, and all that retinue of circumstances which do attend and specify it under a certain denomination, I shall accordingly distribute my discourse into these materials.

I. I shall consider the person that suffered.

II. I shall show the preparation and introduction to his suffering.

III. Show the quality of the agents who acted in it.

IV. Describe the circumstances and manner of the fact. And

V. Point out the dismal and destructive consequences of it. Of all which in their order.

I. For the first of them: *the person suffering*. He was a king; and what is more, such a king, not chosen, but born to be so; that is, not owing his kingdom to the vogue of the populace, but to the suffrage of nature. He was a David, a saint, a king; but never a shepherd. Some of all the royal blood in Christendom ran in his veins, that is to say, many kings went to the making of this one.

And his improvements and education fell noways below his extraction. He was accurate in all the recommending excellencies of human accomplishments, able to deserve, had he not inherited a kingdom; of so controlling a genius, that in every science he attempted, he did not so much study as reign; and appeared not only a proficient, but a prince. And to go no further for a testimony, let his own writings witness so much, which speak him no less an author than a monarch; composed with such an unfailing accuracy, such a commanding majestic pathos, as if they had been writ not with a pen, but with a sceptre. And for those whose virulent and ridiculous calumnies

ascribe that incomparable piece to others, I say, it is a sufficient argument that those did not write it, because they could not write it. It is hard to counterfeit the spirit of majesty, and the unimitable peculiarities of an incommunicable genius and condition.

At the council-board he had the ability still to give himself the best council, but the unhappy modesty to diffide in it; indeed his only fault: for modesty is a paradox in majesty, and humility a solecism in supremacy.

Look we next upon his piety and unparalleled virtues; though without an absurdity I may affirm, that his very endowments of nature were supernatural. So pious was he, that had others measured their obedience to him by his obedience to God, he had been the most absolute monarch in the world; as eminent for frequenting the temple, as Solomon for building one. No occasions ever interfered with his devotions, nor business of state ate out his times of attendance in the church. So firm to the protestant cause, though he conversed in the midst of temptation, in the very bosom of Spain, and though France lay in his, yet nothing could alter him, but that he espoused the cause of religion, even more than his beloved queen.

He every way filled the title under which we prayed for him. He could defend his religion as a king, dispute for it as a divine, and die for it as a martyr. I think I shall speak a great truth, if I say that the only thing that makes protestantism considerable in Christendom, is the church of England; and the great thing that does now cement and confirm the church of England, is the blood of this blessed saint.

He was so skilled in all controversies, that we may well style him in all causes ecclesiastical, not only supreme governor, but moderator, nor more fit to fill the throne than the chair; and withal so exact an observer and royal a rewarder of all such performances, that it was an encouragement to a man to be a divine under such a prince.

Which eminent piety of his was set off with the whole train of moral virtues. His temperance was so great and impregnable, amidst all those allurements with which the courts of kings are apt to melt even the most stoical and resolved minds, that he did at the same time both teach and upbraid the court; so that it was not so much their own vice, as his example, that rendered their debauchery inexcusable. Look over the whole list of our kings, and take in the kings of Israel to boot, and who ever kept the bond of conjugal affection so inviolate? David was chiefly eminent for repenting in this matter, Charles for not needing repentance. None ever of greater fortitude of mind, which was more resplendent in the conquest of himself, and in those miraculous instances of passive valour, than if he had strewed the field with all the rebels' armies, and to the justness of his own cause joined

the success of theirs. And yet withal so meek, so gentle, so merciful, and that even to a cruelty to himself, that if ever the lion and the lamb dwelt together, if ever courage and meekness united, it was in the breast of this royal person.

And which makes the rebellion more ugly and intolerable, there was scarce any person of note amongst his enemies, who, even fighting against him, did not wear his colours, i. e. carry some peculiar mark of his former favours and obligation. Some were his own menial servants, and "ate bread at his table," before they "lifted up their heel against him." Some received from him honours, some offices and employments. I could mention particulars of each kind, did I think their names fit to be heard in a church or from a pulpit. In short, he so behaved himself towards them, that their rebellion might be malice indeed, but it could not be revenge.

And these his personal virtues shed a suitable influence upon his government. For the space of seventeen years, the peace, plenty, and honour of the English, spread itself even to the envy of all neighbour nations. And when that plenty had pampered them into such an unruliness and rebellion as soon followed it, yet still the justness of his government left them at a loss for an occasion; till at length ship-money was pitched upon, as fit to be reformed into excise and taxes, and the burden of the subject to be taken off by plunders and sequestrations.

The king, now, to scatter that cloud which began to gather and look black both upon church and state, made those condescensions to their impudent petitions, that they had scarce any thing to make war for, but what was granted them already; and having thus stripped himself of his prerogative, he made it clear to the world, that there was nothing left them to fight for, but only his life. Afterwards, in the prosecution of this unnatural war, what overtures did he make for peace? nay, when he had his sword in his hand, his armies about him, and a cause to justify him before God and man, how did he choose to compound himself into nothing, to depose and unking himself, by their hard, unconscionable, inhuman conditions! But all was nothing; he might as well compliment a mastiff, or court a tiger, as think to win those who were now hardened in blood, and thorough-paced in rebellion. The truth is, his conscience uncrowned him, as having a mind too pure and defecate to admit of those maxims and practices of state, that usually make princes great and successful.

Having thus, with a new, unheard-of sort of loyalty, fought against and conquered him, they commit him to prison; and then the king himself notes, that it has always been observed, that there is but a little distance from the prisons of kings to their graves. To which I further subjoin, that where the observation is constant, there must needs be some certain standing cause of the connexion of the things observed. And indeed, it is a direct transition from the pri-

son to the grave, *à carceribus ad metam*, the difference between them being only this, that he who is buried is imprisoned under ground, and he who is imprisoned is buried alive. And I could wish, that as they thus slew and buried his body, so we had not also buried his funeral.

But to finish this poor imperfect description, though it is of a person so renowned, that he neither needs the best, nor can be injured by the worst; yet in short, he was a prince whose virtues were as prodigious as his sufferings, a true *pater patriæ*, a father of his country, if but for this only, that he was the father of such a son.

And yet this the most innocent of men and the best of kings, so pious and virtuous, so learned and judicious, so merciful and obliging, was rebelled against, driven out of his own house, pursued like "a partridge upon the mountains," and like an exile in his own dominions, inhumanly imprisoned, and at length, for a catastrophe of all, barbarously murdered; though in this his murder was the less of the two, in that his death released him from his prison.

II. Having thus seen the quality and condition of the person who suffered; let us in the next place see *the engines and preparations* by which they gradually ascended to the perpetration of this bloody fact. And indeed it would be but a poor, preposterous discourse, to insist only upon the consequent, without taking notice of the antecedent.

It were too long to dig to the spring of this rebellion, and to lead you to the secresies of its first contrivance. But as David's phrase is upon another occasion, it was "framed and fashioned in the lowest parts of the earth," and there it was "fearfully and wonderfully made," a work of darkness and retirement, removed from the eye of all witnesses, even that of conscience also; for conscience was not admitted to their councils.

But the first design was to procure a Levite to consecrate their idol; that is to say, a factious ministry to christen it the cause of God. They still owned their party for God's true Israel; and being so, it must needs be their duty to come out of Egypt, though they provided themselves a Red sea for their passage.

And then for their assistance they repair to the *northern steel*;* and bring in an unnatural, mercenary army, which like a shoal of locusts covered the land: such as inherited the character of those whom God brought as scourges upon his people the Jews. For still we shall read that God punished his people with an army from the north: Jer. 1. 3, "Out of the north there cometh up a

* This is no reflection upon the Scotch nation, nor intended for such, there having been persons as eminent for their loyalty, piety, and virtue, of that country as of any other. But it reflects upon that Scotch faction, which invaded England with an army, in assistance of the rebels, and together with them made a shift to destroy the monarchy and the church in both kingdoms.

nation which shall make her land desolate;" Jer. iv. 6, "I will bring evil from the north, and a great destruction."

Now, to endear and unite these into one interest, they invented a covenant, much like those who are said to have made "a covenant with hell, and an agreement with death." It was the most solemn piece of perjury, the most fatal engine against the church, and bane of monarchy, the greatest snare of souls, and mystery of iniquity, that ever was hammered by the wit and wickedness of man. I shall not (as they do) abuse scripture language, and call it "the blood of the covenant," but give it its proper title, it was the covenant of blood. Such a one as the brethren Simeon and Levi made, when they were going about the like design. Their very posture of taking it was an ominous mark of its intent, and their holding up their hands was a sign that they were ready to strike.

It was such an oglio of treason and tyranny, that one of their assembly,* of their own prophets, gives this testimony of it, in his narrative upon it, and his testimony is true; "that it was such a covenant, whether you respect the subject-matter or occasion of it, or the persons that engaged in it, or lastly, the manner of imposing it, that was never read or heard of, nor the world ever saw the like." The truth is, it bears no other likeness to ancient covenants, but that as at the making of them they slew beasts and divided them, so this also was solemnized with blood, slaughter, and division.

But that I may not accuse in general, without a particular charge, read it over as it stands before their synod's works, I mean their catechism, to which it is prefixed; as if, without it, their system of divinity were not complete, nor their children like to be well instructed, unless they were schooled to treason, and catechized to rebellion. I say, in the covenant, as it stands there, in the third article of it. After they had first promised to defend the privileges of parliament, and the liberties of the kingdoms, at length they promise also a defence of the king; but only thus, "that they will defend his person in the preservation and defence of the true religion and liberties of the kingdoms." In which it is evident, that their promise of loyalty to him is not absolute, but conditional; bound hand and foot with this limitation, "so far as he preserved the true religion and liberties of the kingdoms."

From which I observe these two things:

1. That those who promise obedience to their king, only so far as he preserves the true religion and the kingdom's liberties; withal reserving to themselves the judgment of what religion is true, what false, and when these liberties are invaded, when not; do by this put it within their power to judge religion false, and

* Mr. Philip Nye.

liberty invaded, as they think convenient, and then, upon such judgment, to absolve themselves from their allegiance.

2. That those very persons, who thus covenant, had already, from pulpit and press, declared the religion and way of worship established in the church of England, and then maintained by the king, to be popish and idolatrous; and withal, that the king had actually invaded their liberties. Now, for men to suspend their obedience upon a certain condition, which condition at the same time they declared not performed, was not to profess obedience, but to remonstrate the reasons of their intended disobedience.

And for a further demonstration of what has been said, read the speech of that worthy knight,* at his execution upon Tower-hill on the 14th of June last: where, in the third page, he says, that what the House of Commons did in their acting singly and by themselves, (which was no less than trying and murdering the king, proscribing his son, and voting down monarchy; with much more which he there says lay yet in the breast of the house,) was but a more refined pursuit of the designs of the covenant. For the testimony of which person in this matter, I have thus much to say; that he who, having been sent commissioner from hence into Scotland, was the first author and contriver of the covenant there, was surely of all others the most likely to know the true meaning of it; and being ready to die, was most likely then, if ever, to speak sincerely what he knew.

We see here the doctrine of the covenant; see the use of this doctrine, as it was charged home with a suitable application in a war raised against the king, in the cruel usage and imprisonment, killing, sequestering, undoing all who adhered to him, voting no addresses to himself; all which horrid proceedings, though his majesty now stupendously forgives, yet the world will not, cannot ever forget; for his indemnity is not our oblivion.

And therefore for those persons who now clamour and cry out that they are persecuted, because they are no longer permitted to persecute: and who choose rather to quit their ministry, than to disown the obligation of the covenant; I leave it to all understanding, impartial minds to judge, whether they do not by this openly declare to the world, that they hold themselves obliged by oath, as they shall be able, to act over again all that has been hitherto acted by virtue of that covenant; and consequently, that they relinquish their places, not for being nonconformists to the church, but for being virtually rebels to the crown. Which makes them just as worthy to be indulged, as for a man to indulge a dropsy or a malignant fever, which is exasperated by mitigations, and inflamed by every cooling infusion.

But to draw the premises closer to the purpose, thus I argue: That which was the proper means, that enabled the king's mortal enemies to make a war against him, and upon that war to con-

* Sir Henry Vane.

quer, and upon that conquest to imprison him; and lastly, upon that imprisonment inevitably put the power into the hands of those who by that power in the end murdered him; that, according to the genuine consequences of reason, was the natural cause of his murder. This is the proposition that I assert, and I shall not trouble myself to make the assumption.

And indeed, those who wipe their mouths and lick themselves innocent, by clapping this act upon the army, make just the same plea that Pilate did for his innocence in the death of Christ, because he left the execution to the soldiers; or that the soldiers themselves may make, for clearing themselves of all the blood that they have spilt, by charging it upon their swords.

I conclude therefore, that this was the gradual process to this horrid fact; this the train laid, to blow up monarchy; this the step by which the king ascended the scaffold.

III. Come we now in the third place to show who were *the actors* in this tragical scene; when, through the anger of Providence, a thriving army of rebels had worsted justice, cleared the field, subdued all oppositions and risings, even to the very insurrections of conscience itself; so that impunity grew at length into the reputation of piety, and success gave rebellion the varnish of religion; that they might consummate their villany, the gown was called in to complete the execution of the sword; and to make Westminster Hall a place for taking away lives, as well as estates, a new court was set up, and judges packed, who had nothing to do with justice, but so far as they were fit to be the objects of it. In which they first of all begin with a confutation of the civilians' notion of justice and jurisdiction, it being with them no longer an act of the supreme power, as it was ever before defined to be. Such an inferior crew, such a mechanic rabble were they, having not so much as any arms to show the world, but what they wore and used in rebellion; that when I survey the list of the king's judges, and the witnesses against him, I seem to have before me a catalogue of all trades, and such as might better have filled the shops in Westminster Hall, than sat upon the benches. Some of which came to be possessors of the king's houses, who before had no certain dwelling but the king's highway. And some might have continued tradesmen still, had not want, and inability to trade, sent them to a quicker and surer way of traffic, the wars.

Now, that a king, that such a king, should be murdered by such, the basest of his subjects; and not like a Nimrod (as some sanctified railing preachers have called him), but like an Actæon, be torn by a pack of bloodhounds: that the steam of a dunghill should thus obscure the sun; this so much enhances the calamity of this royal person, and makes his death as different from his who is conquered and slain by another king, as it is between being

torn by a lion and being eaten up with vermin. An expression too proper, I am sure, as coarse as it is; for where we are speaking of beggars, nothing can be more natural than to think of vermin too.

For that the feet should trample upon, nay, kick off the head, who would not look upon it as a monster? But indeed of all others, these were the fittest instruments for such a work: for base descent and poor education disposes the mind to imperiousness and cruelty; as the most savage beasts are bred in dens, and have their extraction from under ground. These, therefore, were the worthy judges and condemners of a great king, even the refuse of the people, and the very scum of the nation; that is, at that time both the uppermost and the basest part of it.

IV. Pass we now, in the fourth place, to *the circumstances and manner of procedure*, in the management of this ugly fact. And circumstances, we know, have the greatest cast in determining the nature of all actions; (as we commonly judge of any man's port and quality by the nature of his attendants.)

First of all, then, it was not done, like other works of darkness, in secret, nor (as they used to preach) in a corner, but publicly, coloured with the face of justice, managed with openness and solemnity, as solemn as the league and covenant itself. History indeed affords us many examples of princes who have been clandestinely murdered; which, though it be villanous, is yet in itself more excusable; for he who does such a thing in secret, by the very manner of his doing it, confesses himself ashamed of the thing he does: but he who acts it in the face of the sun, vouches his action for laudable, glorious, and heroic.

Having thus brought him to their high court of justice;—so called, I conceive, because justice was there arraigned and condemned; or perhaps, therefore called a court of justice, because it never showed any mercy, whether the cause needed it, or no:—there by a way of trial as unheard of as their court, they permit him not so much as to speak in his own defence, but with the innocence and silence of a lamb condemn him to the slaughter. And it had been well for them, if they could as easily have imposed silence upon his blood as upon himself.

Being condemned, they spit in his face, and deliver him to the mockery and affronts of soldiers. So that I wonder where the blasphemy lies, which some charge upon those who make the king's sufferings something to resemble our Saviour's. But is it blasphemy to compare the king to Christ in that respect in which Christ himself was made like him? Or can he be like us in all things, and we not like him? Certainly there was something in that providence, which so long ago appointed the chapter of our Saviour's passion to be read on the day of the king's. And I am sure, the resemblance is so near, that had he lived before him, he might have been a type of him. I confess there is some dis-

parity in the case ; for they show themselves worse than Jews. But however, since they make this their objection, that we make the king like Christ, I am willing it should be the greatest of their commendation to be accounted as unlike Christ as they meritoriously are.

Let us now follow him from their mock tribunal to the place of his residence till execution. Nothing remains to a person condemned, and presently to leave the world, but these two things: 1. To take leave of his friends, a thing not denied to the vilest malefactors ; which sufficiently appears, in that it has not been denied to themselves. Yet no entreaties from him, or his royal consort, could prevail with the murderers to let her take the last farewell and commands of a dying husband ; he was permitted to make no farewell, but to the world. Thus was he treated, and stripped of all, even from the prerogative of a prince to the privilege of a malefactor. 2. The next thing desired by all dying persons, is freedom to converse with God, and to prepare themselves to meet him at his great tribunal. But with an Italian cruelty to the soul, as well as the body, they debar him of this freedom also ; and even solitude, his former punishment, is now too great an enjoyment. But that they might show themselves no less enemies to private, than they had been to public prayer, they disturb his retirements, and with scoffs and contumelies upbraid those devotions which were then even interceding for them. And I question not, but that fanatic fury was then at that height, that they would have even laughed at Christ himself in his devotions, had he but used his own prayer.

With these preludiums is he brought to the last scene of mockery and cruelty, to a stage erected before his own palace ; and for the greater affront of majesty, before that part of it in which he went to display his royalty and to give audience to ambassadors, where now he could not obtain audience himself, in his last addresses to his abused subjects. There he receives the fatal blow, there he dies, conquering and pardoning his enemies ; and at length finds that faithfully performed upon the scaffold, which was at first so frequently and solemnly promised him in the parliament, and perhaps in the same sense, that he should be made a glorious king.

But even this death was the mercy of murderers, considering what kinds of death several proposed, when they sat in consultation about the manner of it ; even no less than the gibbet and the halter ; no less than to execute him in his robes, and afterwards drive a stake through his head and body, to stand as a monument upon his grave. In short, all those kinds of death were proposed, which either their malice could suggest, or their own guilt deserve.

And could these men now find in their hearts, or have the face to desire to live, and to plead a pardon from the son, who had

thus murdered the father? I speak not only of those wretches who openly imbrued their hands in the bloody sentence, but of those more considerable traitors, who had the villany to manage the contrivance, and yet the cunning to disappear in the execution, and perhaps the good luck to be preferred after it, and (for ought I know) for it too. And as for those who now survive, by a mercy as incredible as their crime, which has left them to the soft expiations of solitude and repentance (with plenty too attending both); though usually all the professions such make of repentance are nothing else but the faint resentments of a guilty horror, the convulsions and last breathings of a gasping conscience; and, as the mercy by which they live is made a visible defiance to government, and a standing encouragement to these daily alarms of plots and conspiracies; so I beseech God, that even their supposed repentance be not such, that both themselves and the kingdom may hereafter have bitter cause too late to repent of it. But if they should indeed prove such as have no conscience, but horror; who by the same crimes will be made irreconcilable, for which they deserved to be impardonable; who would resume those repentings upon opportunity which is made on extremity, and being saved from the gallows, make the usual requital which is made for that kind of deliverance: I say, if such persons should be only for a time chained and tied up, like so many lions or wolves in the Tower, that they may gather more fierceness, to run out at length upon majesty, religion, law, churches, and the universities; whether God intends by this a repetition of our former confusions, or a general massacre of our persons (which is the most likely); the Lord in mercy fit and enable us to endure the smart of a misimproved providence, and the infatuate frustration of such a miraculous deliverance.

But to return to this sacred martyr. We have seen him murdered. And is there now any other scene of cruelty to act? Is not death the end of the murderer's malice, as well as of the life of him who is murdered? No; there is another and a viler instance of their sordid implacable cruelty.

In the very embalming his body, and taking out those bowels (which had they not relented to his enemies, had not been so handled), they gave order to those to whom that work was committed, diligently to search and see (I speak it with horror and indignation) whether his body were not infected with some loathsome disease.* I suppose they meant that which some of his judges were so much troubled with, and which stuck so close to them.

Now every one must easily see, that for them to intimate the inquiry, was in effect to enjoin the report. And here let any one judge, whether the remorseless malice of embittered rebels ever rose to such a height of tyranny, that the very embalming of his

* Gregory Clement knew what the disease was.

body must needs be a means to corrupt his name; as if his murder was not complete, unless, together with his life, they did also assassinate his fame, and butcher his reputation.

But the body of that prince, innocent and virtuous to a miracle, had none of the ruins and genteel rottenness of our modern debauchery. It was firm and clear like his conscience; he fell like a cedar, no less fragrant than tall and stately. Rottenness of heart, and rottenness of bones, are the badges of some of his murderers,* the noisomeness of whose carcasses, caused by the noisomeness of their lives, might even retaliate and revenge their sufferings, and while they are under execution, poison the executioner.

But the last grand, comprehensive circumstance of this fact, which is, as it were, the very form and spirit which did actuate and run through all the rest, is, that it was done with the pretences of conscience and the protestations of religion: with eyes lift up to heaven, and expostulations with God, pleas of providence, and inward instigations; till at length, with much labour and many groans, they were delivered of their conceived mischief.

And certainly we have cause to deplore this murder with fasting, if it were but for this reason, that it was contrived and committed with fasting. Every fast portended some villany, as still a famine ushers in a plague. But as hunger serves only for appetite, so they never ordained a humiliation, but for the doing of something which, being done, might dine them at a thanksgiving. And such a fury did absurd piety inspire into this church militant upon these exercises, that we might as well meet a hungry bear, as a preaching colonel after a fast; whose murdering humiliations strangely verified that apposite prophecy in Isaiah viii. 21: "When they shall be hungry, they shall curse their king and their God, and look upwards;" that is, they should rebel and blaspheme devoutly. Though, by the way, he who is always looking upwards can little regard how he walks below.

But was there any thing in the whole book of God to warrant this rebellion? Any thing which, instead of obedience, taught them to sacrifice him whom they were to obey? Why yes: Daniel dreamed a dream, and there is also something in the Revelation concerning a beast, a little horn, and the fifth vial; and therefore the king undoubtedly ought to die. But if neither you nor I can gather so much, or any thing like it, from these places, they will tell us, it is because we are not inwardly enlightened.

But others, more knowing, though not less wicked, insist not so much upon the warrant of scripture, but plead providential dispensations: and then God's works, it seems, must be regarded before his words. And the Latin advocate,† who, like a blind

* Clement, Peters, &c.

† Mr. Milton.

adder, has spit so much poison upon the king's person and cause, speaks to the matter roundly. *Deum sicuti ducem, et impressa passim divina vestigia venerantes, viam haud obscuram, sed illustrem, et illius auspiciis commonstratam et patefactam ingressi sumus.** But must we read God's mind in his footsteps, or in his word? This is as if, when we have a man's handwriting, we should endeavour to take his meaning by the measure of his foot.

But still, conscience, conscience is pleaded as a covering for all enormities, an answer to all questions and accusations. Ask what made them fight against, imprison, and murder their lawful sovereign? Why, conscience. What made them extirpate the government, and pocket the revenue of the church? Conscience. What made them perjure themselves with contrary oaths? What makes swearing a sin, and yet forswearing to be none? What made them lay hold on God's promises, and break their own? Conscience. What made them sequester, persecute, and undo their brethren, rape their estates, ruin their families, get into their places; and then say they only robbed the Egyptians? Why, still this large capacious thing, *their conscience*; which is always of a much larger compass than their understanding. In a word, we have lived under such a model of religion, as has counted nothing impious but loyalty, nothing absurd but restitution.

But, O blessed God! to what a height can prosperous, audacious impiety arise! Was it not enough that men once crucified Christ; but that there should be a generation of men who should also crucify Christianity itself? Must he, who taught no defence but patience, allowed no armour but submission, and never warranted any man to shed any other blood but his own, be now again mocked with soldiers, and vouched the patron and author of all those hideous murders and rebellions, which an ordinary impiety would stand amazed at the hearing of? and which in this world he has so plainly condemned by his word, and will hereafter as severely sentence in his own person? Certainly, these monsters are not only the spots of Christianity, but so many standing exceptions from humanity and nature: and since most of them are anabaptists, it is pity that in repeating their baptism, they did not baptize themselves into another religion.

V. For the fifth and last place, let us view the horridness of the fact in the *fatal consequences which did attend it*. Every great villany is like a great absurdity, drawing after it a numerous train of homogeneous consequences; and none ever spread itself into more than this. But I shall endeavour to reduce them all to these two sorts. 1. Such as were of a civil; 2. Such as were of a religious concern.

1. And first for the civil, political consequences of it. There

* In Præfat. ad Defensionem pro Populo Anglicano (as his Latin is).

immediately followed a change of government, of a government whose praise had been proclaimed for many centuries, and enrolled in the large fair characters of the subject's enjoyment and experience. It was now shred into a democracy; and the stream of government, being cut into many channels, ran thin and shallow: whereupon the subject having many masters, every servant had so many distinct servitudes.

But the wheel of providence, which only they looked upon, and that even to a giddiness, did not stop here: but by a fatal, ridiculous vicissitude, both the power and wickedness of those many was again revolved, and compacted into one: from that on* again it returned to many, with several attending variations, till at length we pitched upon one† again; one beyond whom they could not go, the *ne plus ultra* of all regal excellency, as all change tends to, and at last ceases upon its acquired perfection.

Nor was the government only, but also the glory of the English nation changed; distinction of orders confounded, the gentry outbraved, and the nobility, who voted the bishops out of their dignities in parliament, by the just judgment of God, thrust out themselves, and brought under the scorn and imperious lash of a beggar on horseback; "learning discountenanced, and the universities threatened, their revenues to be sold, their colleges to be demolished; the law to be reformed after the same model; the records of the nation to be burnt."‡ Such an inundation and deluge of ruin, reformation, and confusion, had spread itself upon the whole land, that it seemed a kind of resemblance of Noah's deluge, in which only a few men survived amongst many beasts.

2. The other sort of consequences were of a religious concernment. I speak not of the contempt, rebuke, and discouragement lying upon the divines, or rather the preachers§ of those days; for they brought these miseries upon themselves, and had more cause a great deal to curse their own seditious sermons, than to "curse Meroz." They sounded the first trumpet to rebellion, and like true saints had the grace to persevere in what they first began; courting and recognizing a usurper, calling themselves his loyal and obedient subjects;|| never enduring so much as to think of their lawful sovereign, till at length the danger of tithes, their *unum necessarium*, scared them back to their allegiance.

I speak not therefore of these. But the great destructive consequence of this fact was, that it has left a lasting slur upon the Protestant religion. "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in Askelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines triumph," lest the papacy laugh

* Cromwell.

† King Charles II.

‡ All this was Sir Henry Vane's villanous and monstrous advice.

§ Presbyterians and Independents.

|| Baxter, in his book dedicated to Richard Cromwell, did so.

us to scorn; as, if they had no other sort of protestants to deal with, as I am sure they well might.

I confess, the seditious writings of some, who called themselves protestants, have sufficiently bespattered their religion. See Calvin warranting the three estates to oppose their prince, 4 Instit. ch. 20, sect. 31. See Master Knox's Appeal, and in that his arguments for resisting the civil magistrate. Read Mr. Buchanan's discourse *De Jure Regni apud Scotos*. Read the *Vindiciæ contra Tyrannos*, under the name of Junius Brutus, writ by Ottoman the civilian. See Pareus upon the thirteenth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, where he states *atrocem aliquam injuriam*, a large term, and of very easy application, to be a sufficient reason for subjects to take up arms against their king. A book, instead of the author, most deservedly burnt by the hangman. But shall we call this a comment upon the thirteenth chapter of the epistle to the Romans? It is rather a comment upon the covenant. Both of which, as they teach the same doctrine, so they deserved and justly had the same confutation.*

But these principles, like sleeping lions, lay still a great while, and were never completely actuate, nor appeared in the field, till the French Holy league, and the English rebellion.

Let the powder-plot be as bad as it will or can, yet still there is as much difference between the king's murder and that, as there is between an action and an attempt. What the papal bulls and anathemas could not do, factious sermons have brought about. What was then contrived against the parliament-house, has been since done by it. What the papists' powder intended, the soldiers' match has effected. I say, let the powder treason be looked upon (as indeed it is) as the product of hell, as black as the souls and principles that hatched it; yet still this reformation murder will preponderate; and January (in villany) always have the precedency of November.

And thus I have traced this accursed fact through all the parts and ingredients of it. And now, if we reflect upon the quality of the person upon whom it was done, the condition of the persons who did it, the means, circumstances, and manner of its transaction; I suppose it will fill the measure and reach the height of the words of the text: that "there was no such deed done nor seen, since the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt to this day."

For my own part, my apprehension of it overbears my expression; and how to set it off, I know not; for black receives no other colour. But, when I call together all the ideas of horror, rake all the records of the Roman, Grecian, and barbarian wonders, together with new-fancied instances, and unheard-of possibilities, yet I find no parallel; and therefore have this only to say of the king's murder, that it is a thing, than which nothing

* Burnt by the common hangman in Oxon, by command of king James the First.

can be imagined more strange, amazing, and astonishing, except its pardon.*

And now, having done with the first part of the text, does it not naturally engage me in the duty of the second? Must such a deed, as was neither seen nor heard of, be also neither spoken of? or must it be stroked with smooth, mollifying expressions? Is this the way to cure the wound by pouring oil upon those that made it? And must Absalom be therefore dealt with gently, because he was an unnatural and a sturdy rebel?

If, as the text bids, we consider of the fact, and take advice, (that is, advice with reason and conscience,) we cannot but obey it in the following words, and speak our minds. For could Cræsus's dumb son speak at the very attempt of a murder upon his prince and father? and shall a preacher be dumb when such a murder is actually committed? Or do we think it is enough to make long doleful harangues against murder and cruelty, and concerning the prerogative of kings, without ripping up the particular, mysterious, diabolical arts of its first contrivance. Can things peculiar and unheard-of be treated with the toothless generalities of a common-place?

I will not be so uncharitable as to charge a consent in this particular, wheresoever I find a silence: I will only conclude such to be wiser than others, and to wait for another turn; and from their behaviour rationally collect their expectation. But whosoever is so sage, so prudential, or (to speak more significantly) so much a *politicus*, as to fit himself for every change: he will find that if ever another turn befalls the nation, it will be the wrong side outwards, the lowest uppermost. And therefore for these silent candidates of future preferment, I wish them no other punishment for the treason of their desire, than to be preferred under another change.

But I have not yet finished my text, nor, according to the command of it, spoken all my mind. I have one thing more to propose, and with that to conclude.

Would you be willing to see this scene acted over again? to see that restless, plotting humour, which now boils and ferments in many traitorous breasts, once more display itself in the dismal effects of war and desolation? Would you see the rascality of the nation, in troops and tumults beleaguer the royal palace? Would you hear ministers absolving their congregations from their sacred oaths of allegiance, and sending them into the field to lose their lives and their souls, in a professed rebellion against their sovereign? Would you see an insolent overturning army in the heart and bowels of the kingdom, moving to and fro, to the terror of

* This was far from being intended as a reflection upon the Act of Indemnity itself, and much less upon the royal author of it, but only as a rhetorical attempt, for expressing the transcendent height of one thing, by an equally transcendent height of another: viz. by that of the mercy pardoning, and by that of the crime pardoned; both of them in their several kinds superlative.

every thing which is noble, generous, or religious? Would you see the loyal gentry harassed, starved, and undone by the oppression of base, insulting, grinding committees? Would you see the clergy torn in pieces, and sacrificed by the inquisition of synods, triers, and commissioners?

And to mention the greatest last; would you have the king, with his father's kingdoms, inherit also his fortune? Would you see the crown trampled upon, majesty haled from prison to prison; and at length, with the vilest circumstances of spite and cruelty, bleeding and dying at the feet of bloody, inhuman miscreants? Would you, now Providence has cast out the destructive interest from the parliament, and the house is pretty well swept and cleansed, have the old "unclean spirit return, and take to itself seven spirits," seven other interests worse than itself, and dwell there, so make our "latter end worse than our beginning?"

We hear of plots and combinations, parties joining and agreeing: and let us not trust too much in their opposition amongst themselves. The elements can fight, and yet unite into one body. Ephraim against Manasseh, and Manasseh against Ephraim; but both equally against the royal tribe of Judah. Now if we dread these furies again being let loose upon us, oh! let us fear the return of our former provocations. If we would keep off the axe from our princes and nobles, let us lay it to our sins. If we would preserve their lives, let us amend our own. We have complained of armies, committees, sequestrators, triers, and decimators. But our sins, our sins, are those that have sucked the blood of this nation: these have purpled the scaffold with the royal gore, these have ploughed up so many noble families, made so many widows, and snatched the bread out of the mouths of so many poor orphans. It is our not fearing God, that has made others not to honour the king; our not benefiting by the ordinances of the church, that has enriched others with her spoils.

And now, since I have slid into the mention of the church of England, which, at this time is so much struck and railed at, and in danger (like its first head) to be crucified between two thieves: I shall say thus much of it; that it is the only church in Christendom we read of, whose avowed principles and practices disown all resistance of the civil power; and which the saddest experience and the truest policy and reason will evince to be the only one that is durably consistent with the English monarchy. Let men look both into its doctrine and into its history, and they will find neither the Calvins, the Knoxes, the Junius Brutus's, the synods, nor the holy commonwealths of the one side: nor yet the Bellarmines, the Escobars, nor the Marianas of the other. It has no fault but its revenues; and those too but the remainders of a potent, surfeited sacrilege. And therefore, if God, in his anger to this kingdom, should suffer it to be run down, either by

the impious nonsense and idolatry of one party, or the sordid tyranny and fanaticism of the other: yet we will acquiesce in this, that if ever our church falls, it falls neither tainted with the infamy of popish plots, nor of reforming rebellions; and that it was neither her pretended corruption or superstition, but her own lands and the kingdom's sins that destroyed her.

For when I hear of conspiracies, seditious designs, covenants and plots, they do not much move or affright me. But when I see the same covetousness, the same drunkenness and profaneness, that was first punished in ourselves, and then in our sanctified enemies; when I see joy turned into a revel, and debauchery proclaim itself louder than it can be proclaimed against; these, I must confess, stagger and astonish me; and I cannot persuade myself, that we were delivered to do all these abominations.

But if we have not the grace of Christians, have we not the hearts of men? Have we no bowels, no relentings? If the blood and banishment of our kings cannot move us, if the miseries of our common mother the church, ready to fall back into the jaws of purchasers and reformers, cannot work upon us; yet shall we not at least pity our posterity? Shall we commit sins, and breed up children to inherit the curse? Shall the infants now unborn have cause to say hereafter, in the bitterness of their souls, "Our fathers have eaten the sour grapes" of disobedience, "and our teeth are set on edge" by rebellions and confusions.

How does any man know, but the very oath he is swearing, the lewdness he is committing, may be scored up by God as one item for a new rebellion? We may be rebels, and yet neither vote in parliament, sit in committees, or fight in armies. Every sin is virtually a treason; and we may be guilty of murder, by breaking other commands besides the sixth.

But at present we are made whole: God has by a miracle healed the breaches, cured the maladies, and bound up the wounds of a bleeding nation; what remains now, but that we take the counsel that seconded a like miraculous cure: "Go, sin no more, lest a worse evil come unto thee?" But since our evil has been so superlative, as not to acknowledge a worse: since our calamities, having reached the highest, give us rather cause to fear a repetition, than any possibility of gradation; I shall dismiss you with the like, though something altered advice, "Go, sin no more, lest the same evil befall you."

Which God of his infinite mercy prevent, even that God, by whom kings reign and princes decree justice; by whom their thrones are established, and by whom their blood will assuredly be revenged. To whom therefore be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON XIX.

SATAN HIMSELF TRANSFORMED INTO AN ANGEL OF LIGHT.

[Preached before the University at St. Mary's Church, Oxford, on an Act Sunday.]

2 CORINTHIANS XI. 14. .

And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

HE who has arrived to that pitch of infidelity as to deny that there is a devil, gives a shrewd proof that he is deluded by him; and so by this very denial does unawares infer the thing which he would deny. There have indeed been some in all ages, sects, and religions, who have promoted the devil's interests by arguing against his being. For that which men generally most desire, is to go on in their sin without control; and it cannot be more their desire, than the devil accounts it his interest, that they should do so. But when they are told withal, that he who tempts to sin now, is to execute God's wrath for our sin hereafter; the belief of a spirit appointed to so terrible an office, standing so directly between them and their sins, they can never proceed smoothly in them, till such a belief be first taken out of the way; and therefore, no wonder if men argue against the thing they hate; and for the freer enjoyment of their lusts, do all they can to baffle and throw off a persuasion, which does but torment them before their time: this undoubtedly being the true, if not only ground of all the disputes men raise against demons, or evil spirits; that their guilt has made it their concern that there should be none.

Nevertheless, on the other side, it must be considered, that the proving of spirits and immaterial substances from the common discourses of the world upon this subject, has not hitherto proved so successful as might be wished. For that there are such finite, incorporeal beings, as we call spirits, I take to be a point of that moment, that the belief of it ought to be established upon much surer proofs than such as are commonly taken from visions, and apparitions, and the reports which use to go of them; it having never hitherto been held for solid reasoning, to argue from what seems, to what exists: or in other words, from appearances to things; especially since it has been found so frequent, for the working of a strong fancy, and a weak judgment, to pass with many for apparitions. Nor yet can I think the same sufficiently proved from several strange effects, chances, and alterations, which (as historians tell us) having

sometimes happened in the world, and carrying in them the marks of a rational efficiency (but manifestly above all human power), have therefore by some been ascribed to spirits, as the proper and immediate causes thereof. For such a conclusion, I conceive, cannot be certainly drawn from thence, unless we were able to comprehend the full force and activity of all corporeal substances, especially the celestial; so as to assign the utmost term which their activity can reach to, and beyond which it cannot go; which, I suppose, no sober reasoner or true philosopher will pretend to.

And therefore in the present case, allowing the forementioned common arguments all the advantage of probability they can justly lay claim to; yet if we would have a certain proof of the existence of finite spirits, good or bad, we ought, no doubt, to fetch it from that infallible word of revelation, held forth to us in the scriptures; and so employ faith to piece up the shortness and defects of science; which, as nothing but faith can do, so that man must by no means pretend to faith, who will not sell his assent under a demonstration; nor indeed to so much as prudence, who will be convinced by nothing but experience, when perhaps the experiment may prove his destruction. He who believes that there is a devil, puts himself into the ready way to escape him. But as for those modern Sadducees, who will believe neither angel nor spirit, because they cannot see them; and with whom invisible and incredible pass for terms perfectly equipollent; they would do wisely to consider, that as the fowler would certainly spoil his own game, should he not, as much as possible, keep out of sight; so the devil never plants his snares so skilfully and successfully, as when he conceals his person; nor tempts so dangerously, as when he can persuade men that there is no tempter.

But I fear I have argued too far upon this point already; since it may seem something inartificial, for the sermon to prove what the text had supposed. But since the infidelity of the present age has made the proof of that necessary, which former ages took for granted, I hope the usefulness of the subject will atone for what may seem less regular in the prosecution. It must therefore be allowed (and that not only from the foregoing probable arguments, but much more from an infallible and divine testimony) that there is a devil, a Satan, and a tempter. And we have him here presented to us, under such a strange kind of mask or vizard, that we cannot see him for light; and then surely he must needs walk undiscovered, who can make that, which discovers all things else, his disguise. But the wonder ought to abate, if we consider that there is a light which dazzles and deludes, as well as one which informs and directs; and that it is the former of these which Satan clothes himself with, as with a garment. A light so far resembling that of the stars, that it

still rules by night, and has always darkness both for its occasion and companion. The badge of truth is unity, and the property of falsehood variety: and accordingly the devil appears all things, as he has occasion; the priest, the casuist, the reformer, the reconciler; and in a word, any thing but himself. He can change his voice, his dress, and the whole scene of his fallacies; and by a dexterous management of the fraud, present you with an Esau under the form of a Jacob: for the old serpent can shift his skin, as often as he has a turn to serve by his doing so. For it is a short and easy transition from darkness to light; even as near as the confines of night and day. So that this active spirit can quickly pass from one to the other, and equally carry on a work of darkness in both. We read of a *dæmonium meridianum*, though the sun, we know, is then highest, and the light greatest. The psalmist, in Psalm xci. 6, tells us not only of a "pestilence which walks in darkness," but also of a "destruction which wasteth at noon-day;" and consequently that he who is the great manager both of the one and the other, is as much a devil when he shines as Lucifer, as when he destroys as Satan.

Now the devil, I conceive, is represented to us thus transformed in the text; not so much in respect of what he is in his person, as in his practice upon men; for none ever dissembles or conceals himself, but he has a design upon another: and therefore to prosecute the sense of the words, by as full a representation of his frauds as I am able to give, I shall discourse of him in this method.

I. I shall endeavour to show the way of his operation upon the soul, in conveying his fallacies in the minds of men.

II. I shall show the grand instances in which he has played an angel of light, in the several ages of the church successively. And,

III. And lastly, give caution against some principles, by which he is like to repeat the same cheat upon the world, if not prevented in time to come.

I. And first, for *the influence he has upon the soul*. To lay open here all the ways whereby this spiritual engineer works upon us, to trace the serpent in all his windings and turnings, is a thing, I believe, as much above a mere human understanding, as that is below an angelical; but so far as the ducture of common reason, scripture, and experience, will direct our inquiries, we shall find that there are three ways by which he powerfully reaches and operates upon the minds of men. As,

1. By moving, stirring, and sometimes altering the humours and disposition of the body. That the soul in all its operations is strangely affected by, and held down to the particular crasis and constitution of the corporeal part, is indubitable: and that the devil can model and frame the temperament of it to his own

purpose, the woman whom Satan is said to have bound for so many years, Luke xiii. 16, is a convincing instance. Now this expert anatomist, who has examined and looked into all the secret recesses, caverns, and little fibres both of body and soul (as I may so express the matter), knows that there is no grace but has its counterfeit in some passion; and no passion of the mind, but moves upon the wheel of some humour of the body. So that it is easy for him to refine, and, as it were, sanctify the fire and fury of a choleric humour into zeal, and raise the operations of melancholy to the semblance of a mortified demureness and humiliation. On which case of supposed sorrow for sin, but real disturbance from some other cause, it is not to be questioned, but many repair to the divine, whose best casuist were an apothecary; and endeavour to cure and carry off their despair with a promise, or perhaps a prophecy, which might be better done with a purge. Poor self-deluding souls! often misapplying the blood of Christ under these circumstances, in which a little effusion of their own would more effectually work the cure; and Luke as a physician give them a much speedier relief, than Luke as an evangelist.

2. The devil can act upon the soul by suggesting the ideas and spiritual pictures of things (as they may be not unfitly called) to the imagination. For this is the grand repository of all the ideas and representations which the mind of man can work either upon or by. So that Satan, our skilful artist, can as easily slide his injections into the fancy, as present a deluding image to the eye. From whence it is, that poor deluded women (followers of conventicles, or rather of such as meet them there) talk much of sudden joys and raptures, and secret whispers of the Spirit, with a great deal more of such cant; in all which this grand impostor is still at his old work, and whether he speaks in the gentle charming voice of a comforter, or roars in the terrible thunders of damnation, is, and ever was, "a liar from the beginning," and will be so to the end. Again, some perhaps have had a text, of something a peculiar significancy, cast into their fancy; as that for instance in Jer. xlviii. 10, "Cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from shedding blood;" whereupon they presently thought themselves commissioned, by an extraordinary call from heaven, to cut and slay all such as fought for the crown and the church, in the late infamous rebellion.* Likewise it is very credible, that the same spirit can in discourse suggest smart sentences and strictures of wit, far surpassing the invention of the speaker; for otherwise, whence can it be that persons, known to be deplorably dull in other things, can yet be witty upon a subject obscene or profane? And, no doubt, what the papists falsely and ridiculously

* Such persons, principles, and practices, can want nothing to enable them to overthrow any government, but to be countenanced by it.

said of Luther, may with great truth be said of many leading heretics, that the devil furnished them with arguments. For where the cause is his, he will never be wanting to give it a helping hand; but will be still with the heretic in his study, guiding his pen, and assisting his invention with many a lucky turn of thought and sophistical reasoning: so that, upon the whole matter, the devil himself may, perhaps, more properly pass for the heretic; and Arius, or Socinus, only for the amanuensis. For he is able to present images of words and sentences to the imagination, in as clear and perspicuous an order, as the most faithful and methodical memory. And why should the common word be, that the devil stands at the liar's elbow, if he were not to be his prompter? But,

3. The devil can work upon the soul by an actual ingress into, and personal possession of the man, so as to move and act him; and like a kind of vicarious soul, use his body, and the several faculties and members thereof, as instruments of the several operations which he exerts by them. Upon which account persons so possessed were heretofore called *πνευματοφόροι*, and *ἐνεργούμενοι*. And if any one here should doubt that a spirit can move and impel a body, since without quantity and dimensions on both sides there can be no contact; and since without contact some think all impulsions impossible; this maxim, if too far insisted upon, would bear as hard upon the soul itself, as to its moving the body, (allowing it to be a spiritual immaterial substance; which, I hope, in a Christian auditory, needs not to be proved.) And now, the premises thus supposed, how easy must it be for this spirit to cast any person possessed by him into a kind of prophetic ecstasy; and with other amazing extravagancies, to utter through him certain sentences and opinions; and in the utterance thereof, to intermix some things pious and good to take off the suspicion, and qualify the poison of the bad? For so the sibyls used to wait, till at a certain time the demons entered into them, and gave answers by them, suspending the natural actings of their souls, and using their bodily organs of speech with strange prodigious convulsions, and certain circumstances of raving and unseemly horror attending them; as Virgil elegantly describes the Cumæan sibyl, in his 6th *Æneid*.

— Subitò non vultus, non color unus,
Non comptæ mansere comæ; sed pectus anhelum,
Et rabie fera corda tument; majorque videri,
Nec mortale sonans, &c.

Of which words the Quakers amongst us (as little as they deal in Latin) have yet been the best and fullest interpreters, by being the liveliest instances of the thing described in them of any that I know. And so likewise in the case of the person possessed, Acts xix. 16; certainly he could never have prevailed

over so many men, had he not had something in him stronger than man. But what needs there any further arguing, or how is it possible for that man to question, whether the devil can enter into and take possession of men, who shall read how often our Saviour cast him out?

These, I say, are the physical ways of operation which the devil can employ, so as to insinuate thereby his impostures in a clever unsuspected manner: which three general ways doubtless may be improved, by so experienced a craftsman, into myriads of particulars. But I shall confine myself to his dealings with the church, and that only within the times of Christianity, and so pass to the second general head proposed.

II. Which was to show *the grand instances in which the devil, under this mask of light, has imposed upon the Christian world.* And here we must premise this general observation, as the basis of all the ensuing particulars, viz. that it has been the devil's constant method to accommodate his impostures to the most received and prevailing notions, and the peculiar proper improvements of each particular age. And, accordingly, let us take a survey of the several periods of them. As,

1. The grand ruling principle of the first ages of the church, then chiefly consisting of the Gentile converts, was an extraordinarily zealous devotion, and concern for the honour and worship of one only God, having been so newly converted from the worship of many: which great truth, since the devil could neither seasonably nor successfully oppose then, he saw it his interest to swim with the stream, which he could not stem, and by a dexterous turn of hand, to make use of one truth to supplant another. Accordingly, having met with a fit instrument for his purpose, he sets up in Arianism, and with a bold stroke strikes at no lower an article than the Godhead of the Son of God; and so manages this mighty and universal hatred of polytheism, to the rejection of a trinity of divine coequal persons, as noways consistent with the unity of the divine essence. The blasphemy of which opinion needed, no doubt, a more than ordinary artist to give it the best gloss and colour he could, and therefore was not to be induced and ushered into the world, but by very plausible and seemingly pious pleas.

As for instance, that the ascribing of a deity or divine nature to Christ, was not so much a removal of polytheism, as a change. That for Christ to decry the pagan gods, and yet assume the Godhead to himself, was, instead of being their reformer, to be their rival; and that by thus transferring divine worship to his own person, he did not so much destroy idolatry, as monopolize it. Moreover, that Christ himself professes his Father to be greater than he; and therefore, that either he himself is not God; or if so, that the Deity then includes not the highest

degree of perfection. For if Christ was God, and upon that account comprehended in him all perfections, how could the Father be greater? which relation yet must imply a degree of perfection above that of the Son. And if it should be here replied, that the Father is greater in respect of a personal excellency, but not of a natural; such as reply so, should do well to consider, how it can be, that where essence includes all perfection, personalty can add any further. Besides, that the granting Christ to be the Son of God, will not therefore infer him to be God. For a son of a king is but his father's subject; and consequently to assert any more concerning Christ, seems to be only paganism refined, and idolatry in a better dress.

These, I say, were the Arian objections against the deity of our Saviour; all of them extremely sophistical and slight, and such as the heathen philosophers had urged all along against the Christian religion, for near three hundred years before Arius was born: and we shall find them grounded only upon their not distinguishing between perfection absolute and relative, and their absurd arguing from finite and created beings to a being infinite and uncreate; as might easily be shown in each of the foregoing particulars, would the time allotted for this exercise permit. So that it was a most true and proper remark, "that if we take from heretics, disputing against any article of the Christian faith what is common to them with the heathens disputing against the whole body of Christianity, they will have little or nothing left them which is new, or can be called peculiarly their own." Nevertheless, such plausible stuff, backed by power and managed by the devil, drew over most of the Christian churches, for a considerable time, to Arianism; and so, by a very preposterous way of worship, made them sacrifice the Son to the honour of the Father. But,

2. As the Arian ages had chiefly set themselves to run down, or rather quite take away our Saviour's divinity; so the following ages, by an ἀμετρία τῆς ἀνθροπῆς, a kind of contrary stretch, were no less intent upon paying a boundless and exorbitant devotion to every thing belonging to his humanity; and in a very particular and more than ordinary manner, to those who had eminently done and suffered (especially to the degree of martyrdom) for his person and religion. And this was the course all along taken by the papal heresy, from the very first that it got footing in the church; touching which let none think it strange that I make an immediate step from the times of Arianism to those of popery (as if there ought to be a greater interval put between them). For though it must be confessed, that Arianism received its mortal wound by the first council of Nice, pretty early in the fourth century; yet these following heresies of Macedonianism, Nestorianism, Eutychianism, Monotheletism, &c. (which, as different as they were amongst themselves, were

yet, in truth, but so many shoots out of the old Arian stock) continued much longer, and reached considerably beyond the sixth century; about the end whereof, and the beginning of the seventh, popery began to work and show itself by degrees (Gregory the Great, who lived till the year of our Lord 604, being, not without cause, reckoned the last of the good popes of Rome, and the first of the bad); so that in truth there was no vacancy or intermediate chasm of time between the Arian poison ceasing, and the popish ferment beginning to infest the church. Well then, the deity of Christ having been thus irrefragably proved, and Arianism, with its appendent heresies, at length drawing off the stage, and another predominant principle coming on; it was now time for the grand deceiver to change his hand, being to work upon quite different materials, as well as with quite different instruments; and so to turn that vast honour and zeal, which (as we observed) the world bore to Christ's human nature, to the perverting, depraving, and undermining of Christianity itself. For from hence men came to give that inordinate veneration to the sacrament of Christ's body and blood; and for the defence thereof invented that monster of absurdities, transubstantiation. After which, with great industry, they got together and kept all relics, which any way represented his memory, as pieces of the cross, and pictures of his body, till at length they even adored them; and to justify their so doing, they cast their practice into a doctrine that the crucifix was to be adored with relative divine worship: more than which, by the way, the heathens themselves never gave to their idols; but worshipped them only so far as they were representations, or rather significations of those effects and benefits, for which they adored the Deity, the great cause and original of them. But this superstition stopped not here, but extended itself likewise to Christ's friends and followers, the saints; those especially, who (as I noted before) had sealed their profession with their blood: the memory of whom they celebrated with solemn invocations of them at their sepulchres, making offerings to them there, and bowing, and falling prostrate at the very mention of their names; till at length this reverential respect grew into downright adoration. And thus by degrees paganism came to be christened into a new form and name, by their setting up their *divi*, or begodded tutelar saints, and prosecuting their apotheosis with divine worship. And lest in this they might seem to entrench upon the honour of Christ, by treating his saints and servants upon equal terms with himself, they made their very zeal for his honour, a plea for their making these saints their intercessors with him; alleging, forsooth, their own unfitness and utter unworthiness to approach him by a direct address, without such a mediator: as subjects do then most acceptably petition their earthly prince, when their suits are handed to him by some particular and

beloved favourite. A shrewd argument, no doubt, if God and man proceed by the same methods. But to go on: since religion would be but a very lame and imperfect institution, should not points of faith be seconded with suitable rules of practice; here-upon mortification and austerity of life were (in show at least) equally advanced, and Satan began to play the white devil, by prohibiting, upon pretence of higher sacerdotal purity, the marriage of the clergy (though at the same time reckoned by themselves a sacrament), forbidding also certain sorts of meat, and enjoining others; as likewise imposing hair-shirts, whips, scourges, with many more such corporal severities; for the recommending of all which to men's use, they taught them that these practices were satisfactory for sin, and meritorious of heaven. And lest this might seem to derogate from Christ's satisfaction (as it certainly did), they distinguished sins into mortal and venial. And whereas they held, that these venial sins could not deserve eternal death; and withal, that many men die before they have completed their repentance; for them they invented a certain place in the other world, for the temporal penal expiation of such sins; to wit, purgatory. And since the pains of this were not to be eternal, but that a deliverance and redemption of the souls held therein might be procured; and that by the merit of the good works of others, to help out those who had none of their own; they came from hence to assert works of supererogation, as they called them. Which good works, and the merit of them, not being always actually employed for the benefit of any, (and as if the world abounded more with good works than bad,) they are said to be reserved in the treasury of the church, to be disposed of (as there should be occasion) to such as were able and willing to ransom their suffering friends with silver and gold (the very best of metals, and always held by them a valuable price for souls), and this produced indulgences; the most useful and profitable part of the whole Romish religion.

By all which particulars put together, you may see the curious contexture and concatenation of the several mysteries and intrigues of popery; and how artificially one is linked to, and locked within the other, in this chain of darkness made to hold and keep poor souls "to the judgment of the great day;" and (if God be not so merciful as to save them in spite of their religion) to condemn them in it too. And now these tenets being advantaged by the suitableness of them to man's natural disposition (which in matters of belief is too prone to credulity and superstition, and in matters of practice to an arrogant opinion of merit; every man being too apt to think that a good action obliges God, and satisfies for an ill one): these tenets, I say, were upon these terms easily imbibed by the vulgar, in those dark times of ignorance; which ignorance also was carefully cherished and kept up, by maintaining the sufficiency of an im-

plicit faith, and securing the scriptures under the double lock of an unknown language and a bad translation. Besides all which, that they might not in the last place want a sure shelter and strong hold to defend them, in case this terrible book of the scriptures should come to be unsealed and let loose upon them, they had two other refuges to fly to; to wit, that of unwritten traditions, without which they held the scriptures imperfect; and of an infallible judge, without which they affirmed them to be obscure: two qualifications which must unavoidably render the scriptures an incompetent rule of faith. And thus the nail is driven home, and riveted too; and upon their being hereby made judges in their own cause, they do and must stand incorrigible; forasmuch as all conviction upon these terms is utterly impossible. And thus we have seen what a lofty Babel has been raised by this grand architect of mischief and confusion, the devil: a Babel with the top of it reaching to heaven, and the foundation of it laid in hell. And we have seen likewise the materials with which, and the arts by which, this stupendous structure was reared: and since neither old nor new Babel was built in a day; we have given some account also, how this master-builder has all along suited his tools and engines to the proper genius and condition of each several age; sometimes working in the light, and sometimes in the dark; sometimes above ground, and sometimes under it; but in all, like a Romish priest, still under a disguise.

And here, I think, it may be further worth our considering, that since the aspects and influences in heaven (which are some of the chief instruments whereby Providence governs this lower world) must needs work considerably upon the tempers, humours, and constitutions of men, under their several positions and revolutions; it cannot but follow, that the same must work very powerfully about the affairs of religion also, so far as the tempers and dispositions of men are apt to mingle and strike in with them. And accordingly, as I have observed that Satan played his papal game, chiefly in the times of ignorance, and sowed his tares while the world was asleep; *cum Augustinus haberetur inexpugnabilis dialecticus, quod legisset categorius Aristotelis. Cum qui Græcè sciret, suspectus; qui autem Hebraicè, planè magicus putaretur*; when the words *hæreticum devita* were looked upon as sufficient to warrant the taking away the life of a heretic: so on the other side, when this mist of ignorance began to clear up, and polite learning to recover, and get footing again in the world, by the great abilities and industry of Erasmus, Melancthon, Politian, Budæus, Calvin, and several others, men generally then began to smell out the cheat; and after a long growing suspicion of the imposture they had been held under, came at length to a resolution quite to throw it off. But then again, lest so sudden and mighty a stream of light, breaking in upon the prince of darkness, might wholly overbear and baffle all his projects, he

also began wisely to light up his candle too, in the new sect and society of Ignatius Loyola; a sect composed of the best wits and ablest heads, the most learned and industrious that could be got, to list themselves to serve the pope under him. And by this course he quickly brought his myrmidons to fight the protestants at their own weapons, and for parts and literature to vie with the Reformation. For he saw well enough, that it was learning which must do his business, when ignorance was grown out of fashion. And that, when such multitudes were resolved to have their eyes open, it was time for him to look about him too. Accordingly Satan, who loves to compass his ends and amuse the world by contrary methods (like the evil spirit in the gospel, sometimes casting the person possessed by him into the fire, and sometimes into the water), having, as we have noted, long imposed upon Christendom by popery; and at length finding a new light sprung in upon a great part of it, and mightily chasing away that darkness before it, he thought it his interest to trump up a new scene of things, and so correspondently to the two main parts of religion, speculative and practical, he fell upon two contrary, but equally destructive extremes, Socinianism and enthusiasm: thus, like a subtle disputant, casting his argument into such a dilemma, as should be sure to gain him his point, and gall his enemy one way or other. And,

1. For the first extreme, Socinianism. Faustus Socinus seems to have been a person so qualified by Providence with a competent stock of parts and measure of reason, (for the man was no miracle, either in divinity or philosophy,) to show how wofully such a one, being left to himself, might blunder and fall short of the right notions of religion, even in the plainest and most important points of it. He was indeed so bred and principled by his uncle Lelius, that Satan thought him a fit instrument for the advancement of the light of reason above that of revelation, by making (as he notoriously did) the former the sole judge of the latter. Socinus's main design (or pretence at least) was to bring all the mysteries of Christianity to a full accommodation with the general notions of man's reason; and so far the design was, no doubt, fair and laudable enough, had it kept within the bounds of a sober prosecution. For that which is contrary to reason, cannot be true in religion; nor can God contradict that in the book of his revealed word, which he had writ before in the book of nature: so much, I say, is certain, and cannot be denied. Nevertheless, a little reason will prove also, that many things may seem contrary to reason, which yet really are not so; and where this seeming contrariety is, the question will be, whether revelation ought to control reason, or reason prescribe to revelation; which indeed is the very hinge upon which the whole Socinian controversy turns.

But to proceed, and show that even Socinianism itself, by a

kind of antiperistasis, took its rise from popery, as the occasion or accidental cause of it, it is to be observed, that those nice, bold, and unjustifiable notions, which many of the schoolmen had advanced concerning the divine essence and persons (things which the mind of man can form to itself no express idea, nor consequently any clear comprehensive knowledge of) caused in Socinus such a high loathing of, and aversion to that whole scheme of Christian theology, which then obtained in the world, that breaking through all, he utterly denied the divine nature of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and so exploded the whole doctrine of the Trinity, as no part or article of the Christian religion; frequently alleging also, that the urging the necessity of believing notions so contrary (as he pretended) to the discourses and maxims of natural reason, mightily scandalized and kept off the Jews, Turks, and rational infidels, from embracing Christianity. And this consideration he laid no small stress upon.

But in answer to it: by his favour, the contrariety of the notions here excepted against, to the maxims of natural reason (as confidently as it has been all along supposed by him) was never yet proved; and as for the offence taken at it by Jews and Turks, he might have remembered, that the doctrines preached by St. Paul himself found no better acceptance; as being "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness:" but neither by him who preached it, nor by those who received it, at all the less valued for its being so. And certainly the Christian church would make but an ill bargain, to barter away any one article of her faith, to gain either Turk or Jew: and I shrewdly guess, that the Jews themselves understood bargaining too well to part with their Moses for a Socinian Christ. But further, as touching this heresy; the time when it was vented in the world, is no less observable than the instruments by whom: Satan suiting the work he had to do, to the peculiar qualification of the age which he was to do it in. For as the schoolmen, who were the greatest and most zealous promoters of the papal interest, sacrificing both reason and religion to the support of it, were in the highest vogue for some ages before; so the age, wherein it began to decline and go downwards, had entertained a general contempt of and aversion to that sort of learning, as may appear out of Sir Thomas More's defence of Erasmus, and other critics against Dorpius, a great patron and admirer of school-divinity. And as for Socinus himself, the Polonian who wrote his life testifies, *illum scholasticam theologiam nunquam attigisse*. Thus therefore was he qualified, it seems, to baffle the learned part of the world; and having made his first adventure in denying Christ's divinity, and bringing it much lower than ever Arius did, the denial of his satisfaction unavoidably followed; no mere creature being able, in a strict sense, to merit of God, and much less to satisfy for sin. So that we see here, how Satan, under the plausible idea of reason,

introduced a doctrine into the world, which has shaken every article of our faith; and in the full compass of it, grasps in the most considerable heresies that ever were; especially those two topping ones of Photinianism and Pelagianism. And whosoever shall, by a true and impartial logic, spin it out into its utmost consequences, shall find, that it naturally tends to, and inevitably ends in, the destruction of all religion: and that where Socinianism has laid the premises, atheism cannot be kept out of the conclusion. But now, that even reason itself is but pretended only, and not really shown in the doctrines of Socinus, give me leave to demonstrate in one or two instances, instead of many more, that might be assigned.

(1.) That this doctrine asserts Christ to be a mere creature, and yet ascribes to him divine worship, and that both as to adoration and invocation; and this upon absolute and indispensable necessity.* So that whereas Socinus says, that the Jews and Turks are so scandalized at our asserting Christ's deity, I am sure, that by a peculiar and better grounded aversion, they are more scandalized at idolatry. And if Socinus will advance this proposition, that Jesus Christ is not by nature God, let Jews, Turks, and all infidels of common sense alone to make the assumption, that then he is not to be worshipped with divine worship. Christianus Francken shamefully baffled Socinus upon this head. And it is impossible for him, or any of his tribe, to maintain it. But,

(2.) This doctrine asserts also, that God cannot certainly foreknow future contingents; as Socinus positively concludes in the eleventh chapter of his *Prelections*;† where, in answering, or

* See Socinus in his catechism, discoursing of those who allow not of the adoration and invocation of Christ. "Quid censes" (says he) "de iis, qui ista Christo non tribuunt?" To which he answers: "Censeo illos nos esse Christianos; quippe qui revera Christum non habeant: et Jesum esse Christum licet fortasse aperte verbis non audeant, re tamen ipsâ omnino negent." And elsewhere: "Præstat trinitarium esse, quàm asserere Christum non esse adorandum."

† "Cum igitur nulla ratio, nullus sacrarum literarum locus sit, ex quo aperte colligi possit, Deum omnia, quæ fiunt, seivisse, antequam fierent, concludendum est minimè asserendam esse à nobis, istam Dei præscientiam," &c. *Socinus, Prælectionum capite 11mo*. In stating of which point, the heretic indeed grants, that where God has peremptorily purposed or decreed to do a thing, he infallibly knows that the thing so decreed shall certainly come to pass, and accordingly may as infallibly foretell it. A great matter, no doubt. But, by his favour, what is this to God's foretelling of sinful actions, together with many passages of great moment depending thereupon, (all of them declared by the prophets, many ages before the event of them?) For these things, as bad as they are, have their events, as well as the best that happen; and yet cannot be ascribed to God, as the cause or producer of them. Whereupon, since such events, according to Socinus, proceed wholly from the free will of the immediate agents, he denies God to have any certain prescience of them; for that he will not so much as allow them to be in the number of things in their nature knowable, nor consequently to fall within the object of omniscience itself. Which though it extends to all that is knowable, yet reaches not beyond it. In answer to which I grant, that such future contingents as depend wholly upon the free turn of man's will are not antecedently knowable to a finite understanding; but that they are simply and absolutely in the very nature of them not knowable, this I utterly deny; and on the contrary affirm, that to an infinite understanding they are both knowable, and actually known too. And the reason of this difference is, because an infinite understanding never looks upon

rather eluding such scriptures as declare the contrary, he all along with a bold impiety degrades the divine knowledge into mere conjecture, and no more; and so ranges the all-knowing God with the heathen oracles, soothsayers, and astrologers, not allowing him any preeminence above them, but only a better faculty at guessing than they had. So that hereby the heretic is either for giving us a deity without infinite perfection, or an infinite perfection without a power of infallible prediction, or an infallibility of prediction without any certain knowledge of the thing foretold: which, amongst all other wretched consequences, must needs render God such a governor of the world, as, in those many important affairs of it, depending upon the free motions of man's will, shall not be able to tell certainly what shall come to pass in it, so much as one day before it actually happens. He may indeed, as I showed before, shrewdly guess at events, (and so may a wise man too,) but further than guessing he cannot go. All which are such monstrous assertions, and so scandalously contumelious to the divine nature and attributes, and yet so inevitably resulting from the position first laid down by him, that nothing can equal the profaneness of them, but the absurdity.

As for several others of the Socinian errors; to wit, about the nature of the sacraments, the divine covenants, the ministry, and the church, with sundry other parts of divinity, I purposely omit them; and only mention these two, as being in themselves not grosser errors in divinity, than inconsistencies in philosophy. So that upon this turn at least, we may worthily use that remark of Grotius, in his book concerning the satisfaction of Christ; *Mirum esse, toties à Socino ostentari rectam rationem, ostendi nusquam*. But to show compendiously how he stabs not only the Christian, but also all religions, by one assertion: we must know, that the chief cornerstone laid by him in this supposed rational (and by some so much adored) doctrine, is his affirming, that by the light of natural reason no man can know that there is a God; as you may see in the second chapter of his forementioned Prelections. For the proof of which, amongst other places of scripture, he wrests and abuses that in Heb. xi. 6, where the apostle tells us, that "he who comes to God, must believe that he is." Mark it, says Socinus; it is here said only, that he must believe this, not that he must know, or scientifically assent to it. But, by his favour, as this is not here said, so it is as true that it is not here denied. And this new teacher of the world should, one

a future contingent, but it looks beyond it too; that is to say, by one single act of knowledge God sees it, both in the instant of nature before its production, and in the instant of nature after it: which is the true account of this matter, as being founded in the comprehensiveness of God's knowledge, taking in past, present, and future, by one single view. *Scientia Dei ad omnia præsentialiter se habet*. And how difficult soever (if at all possible) it may be for human reason, to form to itself a clear notion of the imminent acts of God; yet all that is or can be excepted against the account now given by us, will be found but mere cavil, and not worth an answer.

would think, have known that the words *πίστις* and *πιστεύω*, *belief* and *believe*, are not always used in a strict philosophical sense, for an assent upon testimony, in contradistinction to an assent upon grounds of science; but generally, and at large, for any firm assent, whether upon one account or the other. I say, as this is certain from the use of the word in common speech, so there is nothing to prove that the apostle, in this sixth verse of the aforementioned chapter, uses it otherwise than in this general, popular, and more enlarged sense. Nevertheless, admitting, but not granting, that he took the word in this text, in the strict philosophical sense of it, for an assent upon testimony; must this therefore exclude all assent upon scientific grounds? Whereas it is certain that the same thing may be the object both of our knowledge and belief; and that we may assent to the same proposition, upon the discourses of reason, drawn from the nature of the thing contained in that proposition; and withal upon the affirmation of one whom, for his knowledge and veracity, we know worthy to be believed. No true philosopher, I am sure (which Socinus never was), either will or can deny this.

But on the contrary, and in opposition to these new notions, I shall proceed further, and venture to affirm, that to believe that there is a God, only because God says so, is a mere *petitio principii*, and manifestly circular and ridiculous; as supposing and taking for granted the very thing, which as yet is under inquiry, and ought to be proved. For the being of a God is the thing here to be proved; and the testimony of God, whereby it is to be proved, must presuppose, or rather imply the antecedent being of him whose testimony it is. Supposing, therefore, that the first revelation made to man of the being of God (for it is of that only we now speak), was by an express, audible declaration of himself to be God; yet this bare affirmation could not of itself, and in the way of a testimony, oblige a man to believe or assent to the thing affirmed, while he was yet ignorant who or what he was from whom it proceeded. For surely, in order of nature, I must know that it is God who says a thing before I can believe it true, because God says it. Otherwise, suppose some angel had affirmed himself to be God, as the devil in effect did, when he challenged to himself the dominion and disposal of all the kingdoms of the world, and required divine worship of our Saviour thereupon; none certainly will pretend that such a declaration could oblige our assent. But when God affirmed or declared himself to be God, in the first age or ages of the world; no doubt this declaration was made, in such a transcendent and supernatural way, and with circumstances so wonderfully glorious and extraordinary, that he or they to whom it was made, and Adam in particular, could not but perceive that the person making it was a being much above the condition of a creature, and consequently God. And such an acknowledgment of, or

assent to the being of a God, was really an act of knowledge, as inferring the cause from the effect, and that too, such an effect, as could issue from nothing but such a cause. For which reason, the assent given in this case could not be founded upon bare testimony, nor be formally an act of belief, but an act properly and strictly scientific. From all which I conclude, that it is absurd and irrational to suppose, that we can believe the being of a God upon the bare affirming this of himself, unless we have some precedent or concomitant knowledge, that the person so affirming it is God. And this utterly overthrows the assertion of Socinus; that the being of a God is knowable only by faith or belief. An assertion much fitter to undermine than establish the belief of a Deity upon the true grounds of it; but it was perhaps for this very purpose that he intended it.

And thus much for the first extreme mentioned; by which Satan has poisoned the principles and theoretic part of religion; though the poison will be found of that spreading malignity, as to influence the practice too. And so we come to

2. The second extreme mentioned; under which, as an angel of light, he more directly strikes at the practice of religion; and that is enthusiasm. A thing not more detestable in its effects, than plausible in its occasion. For men being enraged at the magisterial imposing of traditions upon them, as a rule of faith equal to the written word; and being commanded withal to submit their reason to the cheat of an infallible interpreter, they too naturally struck off to this extreme, to slight and lay aside the judgment of all antiquity, and so to adhere only to the bare letter of the scripture, and then both to secure and authorize their errors, they made their own reason, or rather humour (first surnaming it the Spirit), the infallible, unappealable judge of all that was delivered in the written word. And now, upon these terms, what could keep a man so disposed from coming over to Socinianism; since the prime art and engine made use of by Socinus himself, for the venting of all his abominations, was a professed defiance of the judgment of all antiquity in matters of religion? And what likewise could hinder a man (if his temper inclined that way) from taking up in anabaptism, when he could neither find any clear precept for infant baptism, nor express instance of it in the scripture; but only probable inferences from thence, and remote consequences; all of them perhaps too little, without the universal tradition of the church, to found the necessity and perpetuity of such a practice upon? Especially having been encountered by such specious objections as have been too often produced against it. And thus we see how both the two forementioned extremes commence upon one and the same principle; to wit, the laying aside the judgment of antiquity, both in matters of faith, and in all expositions of scripture. But Socinianism being, as was observed, a heresy much too fine for

the gross and thick genius of vulgar capacities, the devil found it requisite sometimes to change his engine, and amongst such as these, to set up his standard in Familism or enthusiasm. A monster, from whose teeming womb have issued some of the vilest, the foulest, and most absurd practices and opinions, that the nature of man (as corrupt as it is) was ever poisoned and polluted with. For these enthusiasts having first brought all to the naked letter of scripture, and then confined that letter only to the exposition of the Spirit (as they called it), they proceed further, and advance this mystery of iniquity to its highest ἀκμή, by asserting the immediate indwelling of the Spirit in their persons; so that by his impulse and authority, they may, like Abraham, Phinehas, or Ehud, be carried out to actions, otherwise, and in other men, indeed unlawful, but in themselves sufficiently warranted by the Spirit's dispensing with his own laws in their behalf, and much more with the laws of men; besides that, according to the same doctrine, he only, who has this Spirit, can be a competent judge of what is suggested to him by it. A principle of that diabolical malignity, that it sets men beyond all reach of the magistrate, and frets asunder the very nerves of all government and society. For it owns an impulse lawful, and yet unaccountable; whereby they are empowered to shake off laws, invade the rights and properties of all about them, and, if they please, to judge, sentence, and put to death kings; because "the spiritual man," forsooth, "judgeth all things, but himself is judged of none." And these were the persons who would needs set up for the new lights of this last age: blazing comets always portending, or rather causing wars and confusions both in church and state; first setting all on fire, and then shining by the flames they raised. But light, as we have seen, being so often made the devil's livery, no wonder if his servants affect to be seen in it.

And now, after this short view of popery and enthusiasm, I hope I shall not incur the suspicion of any bias to the former, if (as bad it is) I prefer it to the latter, and allow it the poor commendation of being the less evil of the two. I confess, that under both, the great enemy of truth strikes at our church and state; and that, whether he acts by the fanatic *illuminati*, or by Vaux's lantern, the mischief projected by him is the same; there being in both a light (and something else) within, for the blowing up of churches and kingdoms too. Nevertheless, if we consider and compare these two extremes together, we shall find enthusiasm the more untractable, furious, and pernicious of the two, and that in a double respect. 1. That the evils of popery are really the same in enthusiasm; and, 2. That the little good which is in popery is not in this.

And first: that the evils of both are equal, may appear upon these two accounts.

(1.) That the enthusiasts challenge the same infallibility which

the papal church does, but are more intolerable in their claim; for popery places it only in one person, the pretended head of the church, the pope; but enthusiasm claims it as belonging to every Christian amongst them, every particular member of their church: so that upon a full estimate of the matter, the papacy is only enthusiasm contracted, and enthusiasm the papacy diffused; the evil is the same in both, with the advantage of multiplication in the latter. But,

(2.) Both of them equally take men off from the scriptures, and supplant their authority. For as one does it by traditions, making them equal to the written word; so the other does it by pretending the immediate guidance of the Spirit, without the rule of the said word. For see with what contempt the father of the Familists, Henry Nicholas, casts off the use and authority of it. See also the Quakers, who may pass for the very elixir, the *ultimum quod sit*, and hitherto the highest form of enthusiasts amongst us;—see, I say, how they recur only to the light within them; a broad hint to men of sense and experience, how they intend to dispose of the scriptures, when the angel of this light within them shall think fit to screw them up to a higher dispensation; for then no doubt they will judge it convenient to bury this dead letter out of their sight. But,

2. As for the other proposition mentioned by us, viz. That the little good which is in popery is not in enthusiasm: this will appear upon these grounds.

(1.) Upon a political account. The design of the popish religion is, in the several parts and circumstances of it, to reach and accommodate itself, as much as possible, to all the humours and dispositions of men: and I know no argument, like this universal compliance, to prove it catholic by. So that a learned person,* in his *Europæ Speculum*, or survey of the religions of the western church, pronounces popery, upon a strict view of the artificial, wonderful composure of the whole frame of it, the greatest piece of practical wit that was ever yet set on foot in the world. For to show how, in a depraved sense, it “becomes all things to all men;” is any one of a pious, strict, and severely disposed mind? there are those retirements, austerities, and mortifications in this religion, which will both employ and gratify such a disposition. Or is he, on the other side, of a loose, jolly temper? why there is that sufficiency placed in the *opus operatum*, and the external acts of religion, pieced out with suitable supplies from the bank of merit, which shall make the whole practice of it easy and agreeable. And lastly, if a man has lost his estate, broken his credit, missed of his preferments, failed in his projects, or the like; he may fairly and creditably take sanctuary in some monastery or convent: and so pretend piously to leave the world, as soon as he finds that the world is leaving him.

And as for the doctrinal part of the Christian religion, Escobar, with his fellow casuists, has so pared off all the roughness of that, and suited the strictest precepts to the largest and loosest consciences, that it will be a much harder matter to prove a man a sinner, than to condemn him for his being so; so carefully and powerfully do these men step in between sin and sorrow: so that if conscience should at any time become troublesome, and guilt begin to lift up its voice and grow clamorous, it is but to go and disgorge all in confession, and then absolution issuing of course, eases the mind, and takes off all that anguish and despair, which (should it lie pent up without vent) might overwhelm, or, as Ovid expresses it, even choke or strangle a man, and either send him to a halter, or prove itself instead of one.

And thus these spiritual sinks receive and divert all those ill humours of desperate discontented persons (which the world will never want), and which, in all probability, would otherwise discharge and spend themselves upon the state. For he who is malcontent and desperate, will assuredly either let fall his spirit and consume himself, or keep it up, and so, as occasion serves, wreak his spite upon the public: for spite will be always working, and either find or make itself an object to work upon. Cain was the only person I have read of, who sought to divert his discontent by building cities; but the reason was, because then there were none for him to pull down. These, I say, are some of the benefits and benign influences, which the papal constitution bestows upon the outward and civil concerns of such as fall within its communion.

But on the contrary, where the quicksilver or rather gunpowder of enthusiasm (for the fifth of November must not claim it all) has once insinuated itself into the veins and bowels of a kingdom, it presently rallies together all the distempers, all the humours, all the popular heats and discontents, till it kicks down crowns and sceptres, tramples upon thrones, much like those boisterous vapours shut up within the caverns of the earth, which no sooner inspire it into a quaking fit (as I may express it), but it overturns houses and towns, swallows up whole cities, and in a word, writes its history in ruins and desolations; or in something more terrible than all, called a further reformation. But,

(2.) Popery is likewise preferable to enthusiasm, in respect of the nature, quality, and complexion of the subjects in which it dwells.

The popish religion has not been of that poisonous influence, but it has brought up men of accomplished learning and morals, of a sublime wit, and all other excellent parts and endowments, which human nature can recommend itself by; whereas enthusiasm, on the contrary, seldom or never falls upon such disposi-

tions, but commonly takes up its abode in the gloomy regions of melancholy, of an ill habit of body, and a worse of mind; so that the spirit of darkness, brooding upon the ill humours of the one and the distractions of the other, commonly hatches this monster. For, to look back upon some of the most noted ring-leaders and promoters of our late disorders in church and state, were they not such as were first under some disorder themselves? Persons for the most part cracked either in fortune or in brain, acted by preternatural heats and ferments; and so mistaking that for devotion, which was only distemper, and for a good conscience, which too often proved little else but a bad constitution. And in such cases certainly we may well collect the malignity of that principle, which never dwells but in such venomous tempers; and rationally conclude, that the leprosy must needs have seized the inhabitants, where the infection sticks so close to the walls.

(3.) Popery is likewise much more tolerable than enthusiasm, upon a religious account. The great basis and foundation upon which the whole body of Christianity rests, is the divinity of Christ's person, the history of his nativity, life, and death, his actions and sufferings, and his resurrection and ascension concluding all. But though the popish church has presumed to make several bold additions to, and some detractions from, the old system of our faith; yet it always acknowledged and held sacred the foregoing articles, without ever venturing to make any breach upon them. Whereas on the contrary, Familism and Quakerism, the two grand and most thriving branches of enthusiasm, have reduced the whole gospel to allegories and figures: and turned the history of what Christ actually and personally did and suffered, into mystical and moral significations of some virtues to be wrought within us, or some actions to be wrought by us. And this in truth does and must directly strike at the very vitals of our religion, and without more ado will, if not prevented, effectually send Christianity packing out of the world. Popery indeed has forced some bad consequences from good principles, but this destroys the very principles themselves.

Add to this, that the corruptions in a church are not of so destructive an influence, as schisms and divisions from it, the constant effects of enthusiasm. It being much in the body spiritual as in the natural; where that which severs and dissolves the continuity of parts tends more to the destruction of the whole, than that which corrupts them. You may cure a throat when it is sore, but not when it is cut.

And so I have done with this parallel; after which, give me leave to recapitulate to you, in short, some of Satan's principal and most specious abuses of religion, hitherto discoursed of by us. As first, how he made use of the church's abhorrence of polytheism, for the introducing of Arianism, in the denial of our

Saviour's divinity; and next how upon the declension and fall of that heresy, he took occasion, from the zealous adoration of Christ's person, to bring in a superstitious worship of the Virgin Mary his mother, and of his picture in crucifixes, and the like; and so at length appeared, in popery, a sort of religion, making men in nothing more zealous than in worshipping such things. And lastly, how, when this also was shaken off, with the tales and legends that chiefly supported it, and the bare scripture, with the guidance of the Spirit, made the sole rule of faith, without the help of a pretended infallible judge: he then in the greater and more refined wits turned Socinian, and in the vulgar played the enthusiast. And thus, having pursued the impostor through all his labyrinths, pulled off his vizard, and turned his inside outwards: that we may now, by reflecting upon what is past, the better fence against his methods for the future; I shall here proceed to the third and last general head proposed; and under it very briefly set down some certain principles, by which he is likely enough to play over his old game again, and if not counter-worked, to trump up the same religious cheats upon the world, with more advantage than before. And these are eminently three.

1. The stating of the doctrine of faith and free grace so as to make them undermine the necessity of a good life. God's mercy is indeed the crown and beauty of all his attributes, and his grace the emanation of his mercy; and whosoever goes about in the least to derogate from it, may he (for me) find no share in it. But after all, has not the devil endeavoured to supplant the gospel in a considerable part of it, by the very plea of grace? while some place an irreconcilable opposition between the efficacy of that, and all freedom of man's will; and thereby make those things inconsistent, which the admirable wisdom of God had made so fairly subordinate. But notwithstanding such fancies, we shall find that religion, in the true nature of it, consists of action, as well as notion; of good works, as well as faith; and that he believes to very little purpose, whose life is not the better for his belief.

But to state (as some do) the nature of justifying faith in this, that he who is confident his sins are forgiven him, is by that act of confidence completely justified, and beyond the danger of a final apostasy, so that all sins must for ever after be surnamed infirmities; what is this, but to give a man a license to sin boldly and safely too, and so to write a perpetual divorce between faith and good works? The church of England owns and maintains free grace as much as any. But still let God be free of it, and not men; who, when he gives it, never makes a bare *crede quod habes* the only title to it, or character of it.

Antinomianism, as both experience and the nature of the thing has sufficiently taught us, seldom ends but in Familism. And

the sum and substance of that doctrine is, that it makes men justified from eternity; and faith not to be the instrument, but only the evidence of our justification, as no more than barely declaring to the conscience of the believer, what is already done and transacted in heaven. Now let us see whether the former definition of faith can stand upon any other or better bottom than this of Antinomianism. For if the faith which justifies me be a firm belief and persuasion that my sins are remitted, it must follow, that my sins are remitted antecedently to that act of belief; forasmuch as the object must needs precede the act: assent or belief being such an act as does not produce, but presupposes its object. But if my sins are not actually remitted before I believe, how can I truly believe they are so? unless the believing a false proposition can make it true: which would be a piece of logic as new as this divinity. Bellarmine indeed fixes this upon the doctrine of all the protestant churches, and much triumphs in the charge, but falsely and invidiously, and like a Jesuit, as (in spite of the character some have given him for learning and candour) he still shows himself upon this subject. For all the reformed churches (especially the church of England) disclaim it as a paradox in reason, a pest in morality, and an assertion so grossly absurd and contradictory, that not so much as the least shadow of an argument can be brought for it, unless *Credo, quia impossibile est*, may pass for one, which it will hardly ever do, but in the case of transubstantiation.

2. A second principle, by which in all likelihood the devil may and will (as opportunity serves) impose upon the church, is by opposing the power of godliness irreconcilably to all forms. And what is this, but in another instance to confront 'subordinates, and to destroy the body, because the soul can subsist without it? But thus to sequester the divine worship from all external assistances, that by this means, forsooth, it may become wholly mental, and all spirit, is no doubt, a notable fetch of the devil, who, we know, is all spirit himself, but never the less a devil for being so. On the contrary, we have rather cause to fear, that in the strength of this pretence, the worship of Christ may be treated as Christ himself once was; that is, first be stripped, and then crucified. For would you know what the devil drives at in all this seemingly seraphic plea? Why, first he pleads, that a set service, or liturgy, for divine service is superstition and formality; and then, that churches and a ministry are so too; and lastly, that the very letter of the scripture is but mere form, (if so much,) and accordingly to be laid aside, as in Familism and Quakerism, we have shown, it actually is. But then again, some other short-sighted schismatics were for proceeding upon that doughty principle, that nothing ought to be allowed in the church and worship of God, but what is expressly

enjoined in his written word: and accordingly, in the strength thereof having run down several of the constitutions of the church of England, as forms and rules uncommanded in the scriptures, they soon had the same principle, every whit as strongly, and more justly, retorted upon themselves, by some of the brotherhood of another class, who (their interest leading them to carry the argument much further) inferred from thence, that tithes were to be taken away too. But this, you will say, was a pinching, ill-natured inference; and therefore the presbyterians themselves (who it seems could find matter as well as form in the revenue, though none in the service of the church), not only granted, but stiffly contended also, that tithes were by all means to be continued and retained in the house of God, especially since they were so thoroughly convinced, that without them they could not keep their own. Now, that certainly must needs be a very unkind and ungrateful principle, which starves the persons who maintain it; and a very weak one too, which affords no consequences but what make for its own confutation. It must be confessed, that the power of godliness, so much and so often boasted of by some amongst us, has been a very plausible, well-sounding word; and many a foul fact has been committed under the splendid cover of it. But it is now high time to redeem truth from the slavery and cheat of words; and certainly that can never be imagined to be the spirit or power of godliness, which teaches either to rob or desert the church, and shows itself in nothing but sacrilege and separation; it being, no doubt, a very odd and strange sort of zeal for God's house, which eats it up: and a fire much likelier to come from hell than heaven, which consumes the altar itself. But,

3. The third and last principle, which I shall mention, whereby Satan has so much disturbed and abused the world, and may (for ought appears to the contrary) do so again, is the ascribing such a kingdom to Christ, as shall oppose and interfere with the kingdoms and governments of the world. Christ is indeed our king, and it is our honour and happiness to be his subjects; but where a zealous rebellion destroys monarchy, it renders his greatest prerogative, which is to be King of kings, impossible. There cannot, one would think, be a better design, or a more unexceptionable pretence, than to advance the sceptre of Christ in promoting the due authority of his church; and yet even upon this the devil can forge such blessed maxims and conclusions as these.

(1.) That since Christ has two kingdoms in the world, one his providential over all things, as he is God; the other his mediatorial, belonging to him as head of his church, with a full subordination of the former to his latter, during this world: men are apt to reckon of kings as his vicegerents, only in the administration of the former of these, but church officers as his deputies

for governing the latter; and consequently, that the sceptre ought to submit to the keys, and Christ's providential kingdom to come under his mediatorial: a principle which the pope and some others (should opportunity serve) know how to make no small use of.

(2.) That these ecclesiastical deputies of Christ, by virtue of a power immediately derived from him, may meet together, and consult about church affairs, when and where they shall think fit, in any part or place of their prince's dominions, without his consent; and if they shall judge it requisite, excommunicate him too. And then Buchanan tells the world, "that he, who is thrown out of the church by excommunication, is not worthy to live." And he might, if he had pleased, have told us also, in what soil such doctrines root deepest and thrive best.

(3.) That these ecclesiastical deputies of Christ have the sole cognizance and decisive power in all spiritual causes, and in all civil, and also *in ordine ad spiritualia*.

(4.) That a minister of Christ uttering any thing, though sedition or treason, in the execution of his ministerial office, and in the pulpit, is not to be accountable for it to any civil court, but only to the tribunal of Christ; to wit, the church (or, in other words, to those who call themselves so). Forasmuch as "the spirit of the prophets" (they tell us) is to be "subject to, and judged by, only the prophets."

(5.) That when religion is in danger (of which they themselves are to be the sole judges) they may engage in an oath or confederacy against the standing laws of the country, which they are actually of, and belong to; and then plead that they cannot in conscience turn to the obedience required by those laws, because of the obligation of the said oath.

And now, if this be the grand charter, and these the fundamental laws of Christ's kingdom, and the execution thereof be committed wholly to a sort of ecclesiastics, (and those made such by none but themselves,) it will in good earnest behove kings and princes to turn their thrones into stools of repentance; for upon these terms, I know not where else they can expect to sit safe. As for the late troubles and confusions caused in these poor kingdoms by the same rebellious ferment, and carried on much more by black coats than by red, we shall find that they all moved by the spring of a few, specious, abused words. Such as the Spirit, Christian liberty, the power of godliness, the sceptre and kingdom of Jesus Christ, and the like. Touching which it will be found no such strange or new thing for Satan to teach rebellion, as well as to manage a temptation, in scripture phrase. He can trepan a Jephtha into a vow and solemn oath, and then bind him, under fear of perjury, to perform it by a horrid and inhuman murder. And in a word, by a bold and shameless pretence of God's cause, he can baffle and break through any of his commands.

And thus, at length, I have upon the matter despatched what I had to say upon this text and subject; a subject of such vast importance, that it would be but to upbraid any hearer, to enforce it by any further argument than itself. For can we have a higher concern at stake, than our happiness in both worlds, or a subtler gamester to win it from us, than he who understands his game so perfectly well, that though he stakes nothing, yet never plays for less than all, in any of his temptations? Which being our case, should not he who is so wise, as to see the danger he is in, be so wise also, as not to cast the least pleasing look or glance upon any of his insidious offers? especially in their first addresses, when they paint and flatter most; considering, that nothing ever flatters, but what is false; nor paints but what, without it, would appear exceedingly ugly. There cannot certainly be a greater and juster reproach to an intelligent being, than to barter away glory and immortality for baubles and fancies, to lose paradise for an apple, to damn one's soul to please one's palate; and in a word, to be tempted with such proposals, as the proposer himself shall extremely scorn and laugh at us for accepting. For what is all this, but the height of mockery as well as misery, the very sting of death, and like being murdered (as the best of kings was) by a disguised executioner? For such a one the tempter ever was and will be; never accosting us with a smile, but he designs us a stab; nor on the other hand ever frightening those whom he would destroy. Such a course, he well knows, will not do his work; but that if he would attempt and ruin a man effectually, silence and suddenness are his surest ways; and he must take heed of giving an alarm, where he intends a surprise. No; we may be sure that he understands the arts of tempting too well, not to know, that the less he appears, the more he is like to do, and that the tempter himself is no temptation. He is, indeed, an old, thorough-paced, experienced sophister, and has ways to make the very natures and properties of things equivocate. He can, if need be, shroud a glutton in a fast, and a miser in a feast; and though the very nature of swine hurries them into the foulest dirt and mire, yet to serve a turn, we read he can make them run as violently into the water.

Still his way is to amuse the world with shows and shadows, surface and outside; and thereby to make good that old maxim in philosophy, that in all that occurs to the eye, it is not substance, but only colour and figure which we see. This has been his practice from the beginning, from the very infancy and non-age of the world to this day; but whatsoever it was then in those early times, shall we, whose lot has cast us upon these later ages, and thereby set us upon their shoulders, giving us all the advantages of warning, and observations made to our hands, all the benefits of example, and the assurances of a long and various experience; shall we, I say, after all this, suffer ourselves

to be fooled with the wretched, thin, transparent artifices of modern dissimulation? with eyes turned up in prayer to God, but swelling with spite and envy towards men? with a purity above mortal pitch, professed (or rather proclaimed) in words, without so much as common honesty seen in actions? with reformation so loudly and speciously pretended, but nothing but sacrilege and rapine practised?

This was the just and true character of the blessed times of forty-one; and one would think it a great pity, that the same cheat should pass upon the same nation twice. For nothing but the utter subversion of church and state was driven at, by Satan and his instruments, in what was then done: and lies, oaths, and armies (raised in strength of both) were the means by which they effected it. In short, the nation was to be blindfolded, in order to its being buffeted; and Samson to have his eyes put out, before he could be made fool enough to kill himself for company. All grant, that the acts of the understanding should, in order of nature, lead and go before the acts of the will; and accordingly Satan is always so much a philosopher, as to know that there is no debauching the one, but by first deluding the other.

It is indeed no small degree of impudence (as common as it is) for men to dare to own pretences, contrary to what they actually and visibly practise; and yet, to show how much 'the world is made for the bold' (as the saying is), this has been the constant course of it with an unfailing success attending it. For as long as knaves will pretend, and fools believe (as it is seldom but they keep pace with one another), the devil's interest is sure to be served by both. And therefore, if after all this long scene of fallacy and imposture (so infinitely dishonourable to our very nature) we would effectually obviate the same for the future; let us, in God's name, and in the first place, resolve once with ourselves to act as rational creatures; that is to say, let us carry an open, steady, and impartial eye upon what men do, in spite of any thing which they shall or can say. And, in the next place, let us, as Christians, encounter our grand enemy the tempter, with these two best of weapons put into our hands by the great Captain of our salvation, watchfulness and prayer; and if by these blessed means, God shall discover and lay open to us his delusions, we may thank ourselves if we fall by his temptations.

To which God, the great Fountain and Father of light, who alone can scatter all those mists and defeat those stratagems, which the prince of darkness has hitherto blinded and abused the world by; be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON XX.

THE CERTAINTY OF OUR SAVIOUR'S RESURRECTION.

JOHN XX. 29.

Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.

CHRIST, the great Sun of righteousness and Saviour of the world, having by a glorious rising, after a red and a bloody setting, proclaimed his deity to men and angels; and by a complete triumph over the two grand enemies of mankind, sin and death, set up the everlasting gospel in the room of all false religions, has now, as it were, changed the Persian superstition into the Christian devotion; and without the least approach to the idolatry of the former, and made it henceforth the duty of all nations, Jews and Gentiles, to worship the rising sun.

But as the sun does not display his rising to all parts of the world together, nor to the same region shows his whole light at the same instant; but by weaker glimmerings at the first, gradually ascends to clearer and clearer discoveries, and at length beams it forth with a full diffusion: so Christ here discovered himself after his rising, not to all his apostles at once, nor to any of them with the same evidence at first, but by several ascending instances and arguments; till in the end he shone out in his full meridian, and made the proof of his resurrection complete in his ascension.

Thomas we have, one of the last in this chorus, resolving to tie his understanding close to his senses; to believe no further than he could see, nor to venture himself but where he could feel his way: he would not, it seems, take a miracle upon hearsay, nor resolve his creed upon report, nor, in a word, see with any eyes but his own. No, he must trace the print of the nails, follow the spear into our Saviour's side, till he even touched the miracle, and felt the article of the resurrection.

But as in the too inquisitive beholder, who is not content to behold the sun by reflection, but by a direct intuition of his glorious body, there comes such a light, as at the same time both informs and chastises the over-curious eye; so Christ here, in his discovering himself to this doubting apostle, condescends indeed to convince him in his own way; but so, that while he complies with his infirmity, he also upbraids his infidelity; humouring his patient, but not sparing his distemper: and yet

all this with so gentle a hand, and such an allay of sweetness, that the reproof is only collateral or consequential, not directly reproaching him for his unbelief, but implicitly reflecting upon it, by commanding the belief of others: nothing, in the mean time, sharp or corrosive dropping from his healing lips, even in passing such a reprehension upon his disciple. He only shows him his blind side in an opposite instance, and so leaves him to read his own case in an antithesis, and to shame himself by a comparison.

Now, inasmuch as the distinguishing eminency of the blessing so emphatically here pronounced by our Saviour upon a faith, or assent springing not from sight, but a much higher principle, must needs import a peculiar excellency of the said faith; for its surmounting all those high difficulties and impediments attending it, though still with a sufficient reason to found it upon: (for that Christ never rewards any thing with a blessing, but so far as it is a duty; nor makes any thing a duty, but what is highly rational:) this, I say, is most certain. But then as for those various and different objects, which a genuine faith ought to come up to the belief of, we must not think that the same strength, as to the kind or degree of it, will be able to match them all; for even the particular resurrection of our Saviour, and that general one of all men at the last day, will be found to stand upon very different bottoms: the many difficulties, if not also paradoxes, alleageable against the resurrection of a body, after a total dissolution thereof, being infinitely greater and harder to be accounted for, than any that can be brought against the resurrection of a body never yet dissolved, but only once again united to the soul which it had belonged to before.

Besides which, there have, as to this latter sort of resurrection from the dead, been several instances of persons so raised again, both before, and in our Saviour's time. And in truth, as to the very notion of the thing itself, there appears not the least contradiction in it to any known principle of reason; no, nor yet (which is more) does there seem any greater difficulty to conceive, how God should remand a departed soul into its former body, while remaining entire and undissolved; than that after he had formed a body for Adam, he should presently breathe into it (so formed) a living soul, as we read in the second of Genesis.

So that St. Paul's question, in Acts xxvi. 8, proceeded upon very obvious, as well as great reason. "Why," says he, "should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" pointing therein, no doubt, only to the latter sort of resurrection, specified in the person of our Saviour, and which alone he was at that time discoursing of.

But on the contrary, if we consider that other sort of resurrection of a body raised after an utter dissolution of it into its first materials; neither has the world yet, as to the matter of fact, ev-

seen any example thereof; nor, as to the theory of the same, does the reason of man well comprehend how it can be done. So that the belief of this must needs have been exceedingly more difficult than that of the former.

Which observations having been thus premised, I shall now proceed to close them all with something more direct to the main subject of the text, our blessed Saviour's resurrection. Touching which, though (as it has been already noted) his short continuance under death fully rescued his sacred body from all putrefaction, and consequently rendered his resurrection a thing of much easier speculation, and liable to fewer objections, as well as attended with lesser difficulties, than the resurrection of men's bodies after a total dissolution of them can be imagined to be; nevertheless, it being a thing so confessedly above all the powers of nature, and so much an exception from the common lot of mortality, it could not but offer itself to the apprehensions of bare reason under great disadvantages of credibility; especially when the arguments brought from particular attestations, were to encounter the prejudice of a general experience; nothing being more certain, than that men commonly do not so much believe, or judge of things as they really are, but as they use to be: custom for the most part passing for the world's demonstration, and men rarely extending their belief beyond the compass of what they observe; so that bare authority urged against or beside the report of sense, may sometimes, and in some cases, control, yet it seldom convinces the judgment; and though possibly, meeting with a modest temper, it may in some cases impose silence, yet it very rarely and hardly procures assent.

And probably Thomas's reason, arguing from the common topics of the world, might suggest to his unbelief such kind of doubts and objections about his master's resurrection, as these. "Jesus of Nazareth was put to death upon the cross, and being dead, was laid, and sealed up in his sepulchre, strictly watched with a guard of soldiers. But I am told and required to believe, that notwithstanding all this he is risen, and indeed alive. Now surely things suitable to the stated course of nature, should be believed before such as are quite beside it; and for a dead man to return to life is preternatural; but that those who report this may be mistaken, is very natural and usual. Dead, I saw him; but that he is risen, I only hear; in what I see with my eyes, I cannot easily be deceived; but in what I only hear, I may, and often am.

"Neither can bare report of itself be a sufficient reason of belief; because things confessedly false have been as confidently reported; nor is any thing, though never so strange and odd, ever almost told of, but somebody or other is as positively vouched to have seen it. Besides that the united testimony of all ages and places will not gain credence against one particular

experiment of sense; and what then can the particular report of a few conclude against the general experience of so many people and nations, who had never seen any thing like it?

“Moreover, as the reporters were but few, so they were generally looked upon as persons of little depth and great simplicity, and such qualifications too frequently render men very credulous. They were also frightened and disturbed, and therefore the more likely to mistake; and might likewise be very desirous, both for their master's honour and their own credit, that he should make good his word, and promise of rising from the dead, by an actual resurrection; and upon that account (as great desire naturally disposes to a belief of the thing desired) they might be so much the proner to believe, that he actually did so. But above all, why did he not, after he was risen, shew himself to the Sanhedrim, to the Scribes and Pharisees, and to the unbelieving Jews, openly in the temple, or in the market-place? For this doubtless would have been a much more effectual way of convincing the Jews, than the bare testimony of his own disciples, which might be liable to many, and those very plausible exceptions (with the Jews at least), since nothing commonly more detracts from the credibility of a report, than the credulity of the reporter.

“Besides all which, there appears also something of inconsistency in the main report; for that some report him to have appeared in one shape, and some in another; whereas truth uses to be uniform, and one man naturally should have but one shape; all agreeing that in the telling of any story, variety (especially as to the chief subject of it) is very suspicious.”

These, and the like objections, I say, might be, and no doubt actually were made, both by Thomas himself, and several others, against the resurrection of our blessed Saviour; and how little weight soever we may allow them in point of strict argument, they have so much, however of plausibility and verisimilitude in them, as may well warrant that remark of Calvin upon this subject. Namely, “That Christ, in manifesting his resurrection to the world, proceeded after a very different way from what mere human sense or reason would probably have suggested or looked for in such a case.” Nevertheless I do not much question, but the foregoing objections may be fully answered and fairly accounted for by the respective solutions which shall be here given of them, and applied to them: and in order to this, I shall lay down these preliminary considerations.

1. That the truth of a proposition being once sufficiently and duly proved, no objections afterwards brought against it can invalidate or disprove the truth of the said proposition; and con-

* Quamquam aliter quam carnis nostræ sensus expeteret, resurrectionem suam Christus patefecit; hæc tamen quæ illi placuit ratio, nobis quoque optima videri debet. *Calv. in Harm. Evangelistarum*, p. 373.

sequently, that a man is obliged to believe the same, though several objections should be produced against it, which he is by no means able to answer.

2. That our Saviour, having done so many miraculous works in the sight of his enemies beyond all possibility of doubt concerning them, as to matter of fact, ought not, even by his enemies themselves, who had been witnesses of the said works (upon the strictest terms of reason), to be looked upon in this dispute about his resurrection, as a person confined to, or acting by the bare measures of nature; and consequently, that all argument against it, taken from these measures (they themselves being judges), are to be rejected as inconclusive and impertinent.

3. That God intended not the gospel (of which most things relating to the person and works of our Saviour, no less than his doctrine, make an integral part) should be received by mankind upon the evidence of demonstration, but by the rational assent of faith.

4. That this faith ought to be so far under the influence of the will, as thereby to render it an act of choice, and consequently free; and on that account fit for a reward.

5. That in order to its being so, not all possibility, but only all just reason of doubting, ought to be excluded by it, and reckoned inconsistent with it. And,

6. And lastly, that such an irresistible, overpowering evidence of the object, as is conveyed to the mind by clear and immediate sight, is not well consistent with such a freedom of the act of faith as we are now speaking of; forasmuch as it determines the mind to an assent naturally beyond its power to withhold or deny; let men object or pretend what they will to the contrary.

These considerations, I say, or some of them, duly applied, will account for every thing which is or may be objected against the resurrection of our Saviour. And accordingly, in answer to the first of the foregoing objections, to wit, that things according to the common stated course of nature ought to be believed before such as are beside it; and that it is beside, as well as above the course of nature, for a dead man to return to life; but that those, on the contrary, who report such strange things, may be deceived in what they report, is very natural and usual.

To this I say, that although I readily grant this latter proposition to be true; yet the former, upon which the objection chiefly bears, I cannot allow to be universally so, but only *cæteris paribus*: that is to say, supposing the ground of the arguments on both sides to be equal; and that for this reason, that it is not always the bare difference of nature, in the things or objects proposed to our belief, which is the cause that one of them should be believed by us rather than another; but it is the disparity of the grounds and motives upon which the said things are to be believed, which must determine our belief in such a case. It

must be confessed, that for a man to be mistaken, or judge wrong of a thing, is but too natural to mankind; and that, on the other side, for a man to rise from the dead, is both beside and above nature. Nevertheless, in some cases and instances there may be greater reason to believe this latter (as strange and preternatural as it is), than (in certain cases) to believe some other events, though perfectly natural. As, for instance, that Lazarus being dead, and laid in the grave, should continue there till he rotted to dust, was a thing in all respects according to the course of nature; and on the contrary, that he should rise from thence, after he had lain there four days, was a thing as much above and beside it; and yet for all this, there was a great deal more reason for the belief of this, than of the other; forasmuch as this was undeniably attested by a multitude of eye-witnesses, who beheld this great work, and neither could be deceived themselves, nor have any the least purpose of deceiving others, in what they reported. Nor did the Jews at all except against what was told them concerning Lazarus, upon any of those two forementioned accounts, but fully and firmly believed what they had heard, and that with such an absolute assurance, that they took up designs of killing Lazarus himself, to prevent people's flocking after him, and being converted by the sight of him; which, had they believed him still dead, was surely such a method of dealing with him, as common sense and reason would never have thought of. But,

2. Whereas the next objection represents Thomas pleading, as a reason of his present unbelief, that he saw our Saviour dead and buried, but only hears that he is risen: and that he can hardly be deceived in what he sees, but in what he hears he easily may.

I answer, that as to the simple apprehensions of these two senses, one takes in its respective object by as sure a perception as the other, though perhaps not so quick nor so refined. But the mistake in either of these is not from any failure in the bare simple perception of its proper object, but from the judgment passed by the understanding faculty upon the said perceptions, in wrongly affirming or denying something concerning them. Thus in the present case, Thomas, on the one side, had seen his Lord dead and buried, with his own eyes; and on the other, heard that he was risen from the dead, from the mouth of several known witnesses unanimously affirming it; in which argument the point turns not upon this, that the sight represents and reports its object more surely than the hearing, but upon the qualifications of the witnesses, attesting what had passed concerning the objects of either. And this being so much more advantageous, in point of credibility, on the disciples' side than on Thomas's, had there really been an inconsistency between both their testimonies, that of the disciples ought in reason to have outweighed and taken place of his. But to render his unbelief so much the more

inexcusable, there was no inconsistency at all between what had been affirmed by Thomas himself, and what was afterwards testified by his fellow-disciples. For as Thomas was an ocular witness of Christ's death and burial, so were the other disciples of his resurrection; having actually seen him after he was risen. And as he had no cause to doubt of their veracity in what he told him, so neither had he any reason to doubt of the credibility of the thing told by them. Forasmuch as Thomas himself had seen three instances of persons raised from the dead by our Saviour, during the time of his converse with him: all which must needs, upon the strictest terms of reason, render his unbelief and doubting of our Saviour's own resurrection (so unquestionably attested) utterly indefensible. But to proceed:

3. It being above objected also, that several reports found at last to be confessedly false, have yet for some time been as confidently vouched for true, as this now before us was or could be; and moreover, that there is hardly any report so false, strange, and unusual, but that some have been as positively affirmed by others to have been eye-witnesses of the same:

In answer to which, all this must be granted to be extremely true, but withal nothing to the purpose, since if it proves any thing, it must prove a great deal too much, viz., that there is no credit to be rationally given to any thing that we hear, how credible soever in itself. For certain it is, that many, even the grossest falsehoods, have been reported, received, and actually believed as true; and many stories certainly true have (for a considerable time at least) been absolutely rejected as false: and if this must pass for a sufficient reason to deny, or so much as to suspect and question every thing else reported to us to be so likewise, then farewell all rational belief, credit, and certainty, as being hereby quite sent packing out of the world. But,

4. It is yet further argued, that as the united testimony and report of all places and ages will not gain credence against so much as one particular experiment of sense; so much less can the particular report of a few persons conclude any thing against the universal experience of all.

To this I answer, that the account given by those few disciples, of our Saviour's resurrection, was so far from being contrary to the universal experience and sense of mankind, especially those of the Jewish church and nation, that the Old Testament, as well as the New, has several examples upon record, of persons who had been raised from the dead; which being so well known to the Jews, might justly pass rather for so many proofs, and confirmations of the credibility of our Saviour's resurrection, than that our Saviour's resurrection, after such preceding instances of so like a nature, should be supposed to carry any thing in it contradictory to the common sense and opinion of the world.

Besides all which, those words of Herod, upon his hearing of the miracles of Christ, seem here very observable; "It is John," says he, "whom I beheaded; he is risen from the dead," &c.

These words, I say, so readily uttered by him, without any previous demur or strain of thought, could not but show that the resurrection from the dead, of some particular persons, even as to this life, was no such strange unheard-of notion with him and the rest of the Jews, but that they were so far at least acquainted with it, as to account it neither impossible nor incredible. But,

5. It is again alleged, for the invalidating of the report made by the disciples concerning our Saviour, that the fright and disturbance they were under, upon our Saviour's crucifixion, and the rage expressed by the Jews against his disciples, as well as against himself, might naturally enough bring upon them such a confusion of thought, and aptness to mistake, as might very well lessen the certainty, and consequently take off much of the credit of their testimony.

To which I answer, that fears or frights do not so operate upon the outward senses, as to supersede or hinder them in their first and simple apprehensions of their respective objects, which are also naturally the clearest and most impartial. I grant indeed that fear, and some other passions, may so divert the steadiness and intention of the intellectual judging faculty for some time, that it cannot presently form so exact a judgment upon the objects tendered to it by the senses, as otherwise it might do. But still this is only an interruption of the acts, rather than any disablement of the faculty; which, as soon as the present passion is over, comes to debate and judge of all objects presented to it, as perfectly as it did before. It is disputed, I know, in natural philosophy, whether the sense being duly qualified, and the object as duly proposed, and the medium fitted to both, the sense can be deceived in the apprehension of its object; and it is generally held in the negative. But supposing that the sense might be deceived, this would make nothing against us in the present case; forasmuch as natural fallibility may very well consist with actual certainty; nothing being more true, than that as a man is capable of being mistaken, so on the contrary he is oftentimes actually not mistaken; and whosoever is not mistaken, is, as to that particular act, and with reference to that particular object, truly and properly certain. And this was the very case of the disciples affirming Christ's resurrection, from a full conviction of their sight and other senses; a conviction too strong and sure, to admit of any reason sufficient to overbear it. For as to the foregoing objection, from the greatness of the fear, then supposed to have been upon them, we have shown the weakness, or rather nullity of that already; and not only so, but the very proceedings of the Jews themselves give us

an irrefragable confutation of the same. For, if a report coming from persons under an extreme fear, ought upon that score to lose all credibility, surely this should on a very eminent and peculiar occasion, have taken place in the guards set by Pilate to watch Christ's sepulchre; who (as we read in Matt. xxviii. 4) were seized with such an amazing, dispiriting fear, that "they shook, and became as dead men." Nevertheless the priests (no fools, though something else) looked upon them as very credible witnesses of what they had seen, and afterwards related to them: and consequently judged their testimony, if contrary, like to prove so disadvantageous to their design, that they thought they could not bribe them too high, nor buy their silence at too dear a rate; which, had they thought that all that was told them was but idle tales, and founded only in a panic, unaccountable consternation, no doubt they would never have done at such a price. For Jews, of all men, are not wont to part with their money for nothing, or an idle tale, which was no more.

6. Some argue again, that since Christ had so expressly and openly beforehand declared and foretold his resurrection from the dead, that his adversaries, as well as his followers, had taken particular notice thereof; no doubt his disciples thereupon could not but be highly concerned, that their master should make good that his word and promise in the face of the world: and accordingly (as great desire naturally disposes to facility of belief) they might be apt to persuade themselves, that the event had indeed answered the prediction; and that he was now actually risen, as he had several times promised them, while he lived and conversed with them. Thus their zeal for their Lord's honour might cause them strongly to desire, and that desire as strongly incline them to believe, his resurrection. So, I say, some argue.

To which I answer; that as the objection before this represented the disciples in this whole business as persons extremely weak, so this would represent them as equally wicked; the former, as men wretchedly deceived, and this latter, as designing to deceive others; and that by a vile, fraudulent intrigue, contrived and carried on by them, both for their master's and their own reputation; an intrigue so very fraudulent, that the known, unblemished simplicity, integrity, and veracity of the persons concerned, and so remarkable throughout the whole course of their lives, makes it morally impossible, and consequently incredible, that persons of such a character should ever be guilty of so foul a practice, and so base a collusion. And no more needs be said for their vindication from so impudent a calumny. But,

7. Whereas it is suggested, that nothing could be so powerful and effectual a means to cause and propagate a belief of Christ's resurrection, as to have shown himself, after he was risen, to the scribes and pharisees, and the unbelieving Jews, openly in the temple, or the market-place, which yet he did not; I answer,

that supposing that Christ, after he was risen, had appeared so publicly amongst the Jews, as the objection here requires, no doubt they would have offered to lay violent hands upon him, as they had before designed to kill Lazarus, and that for the same reason. In which case, had our Saviour vanished out of their sight and hands (as questionless he would have done, and as he had once or twice done from the eyes of his own disciples), what would the Jews have concluded from hence, but that they had seen a ghost, a spectre, or apparition? And what conviction would that have wrought in them? Why, none at all, but that their senses had been abused and imposed upon by some magical illusion. And what good effect could this have had upon their minds, for the bringing them to a belief that Christ was truly risen? and much less that he was the Messiah? which yet was the grand doctrine to be proved by the resurrection, and of which he had given them abundant proof before, by raising Lazarus and others from the dead; which yet we find had no such effect upon the generality of them at all. This to me seems as clear reason, and as natural consequence, as the mind of man in such a case can well be determined by. And no doubt, almighty God foresaw this, and many more such consequences, which our short reason can neither reach nor pierce into; forasmuch as his ways and counsels may and ought in all reason to be allowed, to proceed by measures quite different from ours; and accordingly, that he might not think fit to vouchsafe the Jews the highest evidence of Christ's resurrection, which it was capable of, who had rejected such high evidence of the like nature before; but rather judged it enough for him to afford them such evidence of it as was in itself sufficient to convince them, and consequently to render their disbelief thereof irrational and inexcusable; besides that the highest evidence of an object proposed to be believed, may not consist with such a worth and merit in the said belief, as may fit it for a reward; as our Saviour's words to Thomas in the text manifestly import. From all which I think we may, upon solid grounds, conclude that the foregoing objection (how plausible soever it may seem at first) argues nothing against the belief of our Saviour's resurrection. But,

8. It is moreover objected, that there is no small disagreement found in the main report about our Saviour's resurrection; as, that some of his disciples relate him to have appeared in one form or shape, and some in another, whereas one man naturally can be allowed but one form and shape: and withal that he came in to his disciples while the doors were shut, which seems wholly inconsistent with the essential dimensions of a human body, which cannot possibly pass through crevices or key-holes, the nature of quantity making such a penetration confessedly impossible.

To which I answer, according to the second preliminary consideration above laid down by us, that the bare measures of nature, after so many miracles done by our Saviour on the one side, and attested and owned by the Jews, as surpassing all power merely natural, on the other, ought by no means to be a rule for us to proceed by in the present case. And therefore, to give the objection its full force and advantage, supposing it urged by some Jew against the truth of Christ's resurrection, may we not hereupon ask the said Jew this plain question, Were the Jews eye-witnesses of the miracles and supernatural works done by our Saviour, or were they not? The latter cannot possibly be said; there being hardly a man in Jerusalem who had not personally seen some of them done. And if the former be granted, upon what ground of reason could those Jews deny, but that he, who acted by such a supernatural power in some things, might as well do the same in others? or pretend that he who had raised Lazarus from the dead might not, if he pleased, present himself in different shapes and forms; whether it were by differently qualifying his own body, as the object then offered to be seen, or by differently disposing the visive faculty or organs of sight, in such as were to see it? (as we read he actually did to two of his disciples, whose eyes were so held, that though they looked upon him, yet they could not actually know him, Luke xxiv. 16.) And upon the same ground likewise, might he not as well by his supernatural power appear amongst his disciples, "while the doors were shut?" John xx. 19. Though these words taken *in censu diviso* (as the logicians speak), and not *in censu composito*, may be accounted for upon very intelligible grounds; that is to say, that Christ came not through the doors continuing shut, or through chinks or key-holes (as some profanely word it), while he passed into the room; but that, finding them shut, he, without any noise or difficulty, caused them by his supernatural power to fall open before him. And even this was enough to surprise his disciples so far, as to fright, and make them think that they saw a spirit. Which sense of the words, as it is fair and unforced, and agreeable to the common way of speaking, so it infers not in the least that great absurdity in philosophy of a penetration of bodies; though still it must be confessed and owned, that in all this dispute, our Saviour's body, after his resurrection, was not to be looked upon as a natural but supernatural body; that is to say, of quite different qualities from what it had before, albeit we still granted it to have been the same in substance. Upon which account, for bare human reason to be able to assign what could or could not be done by a body so supernaturally qualified (and as it were spiritualized), I think it no reproach to it at all, freely to confess itself wholly at a loss; and consequently, that to argue from the state and natural properties of such bodies as we carry about

us, to those of our Saviour's body, after he was risen from the dead, would be a manifest transition *à genere ad genus*; and so a notorious fault and fallacy in argumentation.

And thus, I hope, I have at length thoroughly examined and gone over all or most of those plausible arguments, which are or may be brought for the justification of this doubting disciple's backwardness in believing his master's resurrection; and trust, that I have given sufficient and satisfactory answers to them all. But as for that objection, or rather senseless lie, invented and made use of by the Jews (as the evangelists record), of Christ's body being stolen and conveyed away by his disciples in the night, while the soldiers set to guard it slept; it is attended with so many improbabilities and absurdities, and those not more directly contrary to reason than to common sense and experience, that it hardly deserves a serious confutation.

For can any man of sense imagine that the soldiers, set to watch the sepulchre, and that with so strict and severe an injunction of care and vigilance, from the priests and rulers of the Jews, should all of them (and those no inconsiderable number doubtless) fall asleep at one and the same time? No; it is wholly improbable, and consequently upon no terms of reason supposable? Nevertheless, admitting, on the other side, that so unlikely a thing had really happened, and the soldiers had all fallen asleep (as the story pretends they did), yet this could not have given the least encouragement to the disciples (at that time but a very few unarmed men) to venture upon such an enterprise: forasmuch as they neither then did nor could foresee this accident of the guards falling asleep; nor, if when they came upon this design, they had found all of them actually asleep, could they have imagined otherwise, but that the putting of the said design in execution would have raised such a noise, as must needs have awakened some of the watch; which if it had, the disciples assuredly must and would have perished in their fool-hardy undertaking; though yet all this while we may very well imagine, that even they, as well as other men, put too great a value upon their lives, to throw them away in so obstinate and senseless a manner. Besides, had the whole matter succeeded as was desired, can we think it morally possible that the Jewish priests, who had so set their hearts upon exposing Christ to the people for an arrant impostor, and particularly with reference to what he had foretold of his resurrection, would not have used their utmost interest with Pilate, for the inflicting some very extraordinary and exemplary punishment upon those guards, for betraying so great a trust, as the Jews accounted it? But we hear of no such thing; but on the contrary, of a very different way of treating these soldiers, from what the priests and rulers would otherwise have certainly taken; who, if the said story had been true, would have been much more liberal in scourging their backs,

than they were in oiling their hands. To all which may be added, the utter unsuitableness of the season (as a foreign divine observes) for such a night-work; it being then at the time of the full moon, when in those eastern countries the night was almost as bright as the day, and withal the time of the passover; when Jerusalem not able to accommodate so vast a multitude from all parts resorting thither upon so solemn an occasion, great companies of them, no doubt, were walking all night about the fields, and other adjacent places; which must needs have made it next to impossible (if not absolutely so) for the disciples (had they got the body of the Saviour into their hands) to have carried it off without discovery. All which considerations, together with many more incident to this matter, render this Jewish story not more false and foolish, than romantic and incredible; and accordingly, as such I dismiss it.

Nevertheless, not to rest here, but having thus answered and removed whatsoever could with any colour, or so much as shadow of reason, be brought for an objection against this great article of our Saviour's resurrection, we shall now pass to such arguments as may positively prove the same; and in order to it, shall premise this observation, namely, that to constitute or render an act of assent properly an act of faith, this condition is absolutely necessary; to wit, that the ground upon which the said assent proceeds, be something not evident in itself. And indeed, so necessary a condition is this, that without it faith would not be formally distinguished from knowledge: knowledge, properly speaking, being an assent to a thing evidently and immediately apprehended by us, either in itself, its causes, properties, or effects. And upon this, and this account only, assent is properly said to be evident. But now, where such evidence is not to be had (as in things not falling under our personal, immediate cognizance, it is not), then there can be no other way of assenting to any such thing, or proposition, but from the testimony of some one or more, who may be rationally presumed to know it themselves; but then such an assent is (as we have shown) by no means evident or scientific, as not being founded in our own, but in another's knowledge of the thing assented to by us. Where, for our clearer understanding of this whole matter, we ought carefully to distinguish between these three terms, evidence, certainty, and firmness of assent. As to the first of which, to wit, evidence: a thing is said to be evident, when there is an immediate perception of the object itself assented to, by an act of our sense or reason apprehending it. And in the next place, as for certainty of assent; that is, when a thing is so assented to, that although it be not in itself evident, yet there is a sufficient ground for such an assent, and no rational or just ground to doubt of it; as where a thing is affirmed or attested, either by God himself, or by some person or persons,

whose credit is unquestionable. And thirdly and lastly, firmness of assent consists in an exclusion of all actual doubting about the thing assented to; I say actual doubting, whether there be a sufficient reason against such doubting, or no; forasmuch as men may be every whit as confident in a false ungrounded belief, as in a well-grounded and true. Now the difference between these terms thus explained must, as I noted before, be very carefully attended to, or it must needs occasion great blunder and confusion in any discourse of this nature. And accordingly, to apply the forementioned terms to our present purpose, we are to observe, that although our assent to matters of faith be not upon grounds in themselves evident, yet it may nevertheless be upon such as are certain: and not only so, but in all matters necessary to be believed (such as our Saviour's resurrection, and other divine truths) it must and ought to be sufficient. And the reason of this manifestly is, that if we might be bound to assent to a thing neither evident nor certain, we might, some time or other, and in some cases, be bound to believe or assent to falsehoods as well as truths: which God never requires, as by no means obliging us to the belief of any thing, but where there is much more reason for our believing than our not believing it; that being, as I conceive, sufficient to warrant the rationality of a man's proceeding in what he believes; especially if it be necessary, that either the affirmative or the negative be believed by him. And for this cause the apostle commands us, 1 Pet. iii. 15, "to be always ready to give a reason of the hope that is in us:" and the same holds equally of faith too, both of them resting upon the same bottom. For neither St. Peter nor St. Paul ever enjoin belief merely for believing's sake; though still they are far enough from requiring us to give a reason of the things we believe (for that I own a Christian must not always pretend to), but to give a reason of his belief of the said things. This every Christian may and must, for still his belief ought to be rational.

Thus far therefore have we gone, having proved, that although the resurrection of our Saviour be a thing in itself invident to us now, and not showing itself at this distance of time by any light either inherent in it, or personally and immediately perceivable by our senses or understandings; yet being proposed to our belief upon certain and sufficient grounds, it ought, according to the measure of the said certainties, to be believed and assented to by us. So that it remains now for us to demonstrate, that the ground or reason, upon which we are to believe our Saviour's resurrection, is certain, and by consequence sufficient. And accordingly I shall state the belief of it upon these two arguments; common, I confess, but never the less forcible for being so.

1. The constant, uniform affirmation and word of those who have transmitted the relation of it down to posterity. For this being merely a matter of fact (the thing in dispute being, whether Christ

rose from the dead or no), is by no means knowable by us, who live at so great a distance from the time when it came to pass, but by one of these two ways, viz. either 1. by immediate divine revelation; or 2. by human testimony or tradition. As to the first of which, it is not now-a-days, by any of the sober professors of Christianity, so much as pretended to; nor, if it were, ought such pretences to be allowed of. And therefore we must fetch it from the other way, to wit, tradition; to the rendering of which certain, and beyond all just exception credible, these two conditions are required.

(1.) That the persons who made it, and from whom it originally came, had sufficient means and opportunities to know, and to be informed of the truth of what they reported to the world. And,

(2.) That they were of that unquestionable sincerity, as truly and impartially to report things as they knew them, and no otherwise.

(1.) Now for the first of these two conditions, viz. that the reporters had sufficient opportunity to know the things reported by them, this is undeniable; forasmuch as they personally conversed with Christ, and were eye and ear-witnesses of all that was done by him, or happened to him, as it is in the first epistle of St. John, i. 3, "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, declare we unto you." And surely, if knowledge might make a man a competent witness, there is none for evidence, as well as certainty, superior to that of sense: and if the judgment of any one sense rightly disposed, be hardly or never deceived, surely the united judgment of them all together must needs upon the same terms pass for infallible, if any thing amongst us poor mortals may or ought to be accounted so. But,

(2.) As for the other forementioned condition of a competent witness, viz. that he be a person of such unquestionable sincerity, as to report the naked truth of what he knows: this, with respect to the apostles in the present case, appears in a great measure from the meanness of their parts, abilities, and education, naturally disposing men to plainness and simplicity; and simplicity has ever yet been accounted one good step to sincerity. They were poor, mean fishermen, called in Acts iv. 13, *ἰδιῶται καὶ ἀγράμματοι*, in plain terms, persons wholly illiterate and unacquainted with the politic fetches of the world, and utterly unfit to conceive, and more unfit to manage any further design, than only to deceive and circumvent the contemptible inhabitants of the watery region. And could such men, think we, newly coming from their fishermen's cottages, and from mending their nets, entertain so great a thought, as to put an imposture upon the whole world, and to overturn the Jewish laws, and the Gentile philosophy, with a new religion of their own inventing? It is not so much as credible, and much less probable.

But besides, admitting these persons to have been as subtle and deeply knowing as they were in truth shallow and ignorant; yet still they were men, and consequently of the same passions and desires with other men; and being so, that they should relinquish all the darling pleasures, profits, and accommodations of life; and voluntarily expose themselves to scorn, tortures, persecutions, and even death itself, only to propagate a story, which they themselves knew to be a lie; and that an absurd, insipid, incredible lie (if a lie at all), this certainly was a thing unnatural and morally impossible. For can any man, not abandoned by the native sense of man, bring himself to be in love with a gibbet, or enamoured with a rack? Can these tortures, which are even able to make a man abjure the truth, allure him to own and assert, and even die for a lie. Wherefore, there being no imaginable objection against the disciples' sincerity and veracity (which was the other qualification of a competent witness mentioned by us), it follows, that their testimony concerning our Saviour's resurrection is to be accepted and believed as true, certain, and unexceptionable. And so much for the first argument. But,

2. The other argument shall be taken from those miraculous works, by which the apostles confirmed the testimony of their words. He who affirms a thing, and to prove the truth of it does a miracle, brings God as a voucher of the truth of what he says. And therefore he who shall affirm, that the apostles proclaimed to the world things false, must affirm also, that they did all those miracles by their own or the devil's power; or if they did them by God's, then that God lent the exercise of his power to impostors, to confirm and ratify the publication of a lie, for the beguiling and deceiving of mankind; and that in a matter of the highest and most important concern to them that can possibly be. Which is so blasphemous for any one to assert, and so impossible for God to do, that the very thought of it is intolerable.

So that now the only thing remaining for our full conviction, is to show, that there is a sufficient reason to persuade men that such miracles were really done by the apostles, to confirm the doctrines delivered by them. And for this we are to hear the only proof, which things of this nature are capable of; to wit, the voice of general, long continued, and uninterrupted antiquity: that is to say, the united testimony of so many nations, for so many ages successively, all jointly agreeing in one and the same report about this matter; which report, if it were untrue, must needs have been framed by combination and compact amongst themselves. But that so many nations of such various tempers, such different interests, and such distant situations from one another, should be able all to meet and combine together, to abuse and deceive the world with a falsehood, is upon all the rules and principles of human reasoning incredible. And yet on the

other side, that this could be done without such a previous combination is still more incredible; and consequently, that neither the one nor the other ought to be reckoned in the number of those things which we account possibilities. And now, all that has been disputed by us hitherto, with reference to the apostles and disciples, as to their believing and preaching Christ's resurrection to the world, may be naturally drawn from, and as naturally resolved into these following conclusions.

1. That no man of common sense or reason undertakes any action considerable, but for the obtaining to himself some good, or the serving some interest thereby, either in this world or in the next.

2. That our Saviour's disciples, though they bore no character for political knowledge or depth of learning, yet showed themselves, in the whole course of their behaviour, men of sense and reason, as well as integrity.

3. That being such, and so to be considered, had they known Christ's resurrection to have been a falsehood, they would never have preached it to the world, to the certain bringing upon themselves thereby the extremity of misery and persecution in this life, and a just condemnation from almighty God in that to come.

4. That had the resurrection of our Saviour been indeed false and fabulous, his disciples could not but have known it to be so.

To which I shall add,

5. That in things proposed to our belief, a man safely may, and rationally ought to yield his assent to that which he finds supported with better and stronger arguments (though short of a demonstration) than any that he sees producible against it.

From all which it follows, that our Saviour's resurrection having been attested by persons so unexceptionably qualified for that purpose; whether we consider the opportunities they had of knowing thoroughly the things testified by them, or their known sincerity and veracity in reporting what they knew, as likewise the miraculous works done by them in confirmation of what they delivered, and all this brought down to us by unanimous, undisputed tradition; and moreover, since such tradition has greater ground for its belief than the discourse of any man's particular reason can suggest for its disbelief (universal tradition being less subject to error and fallacy than such discourses or argumentations can pretend to be): and lastly, since it is a manifest absurdity in reasoning, to reject or disbelieve that which a man has more ground and reason to believe, than to disbelieve: I conclude that the doctrine of the apostles concerning our Saviour's resurrection ought, upon the strictest terms of reasoning, to be believed and assented to, as a most certain, irrefragable, and uncontestable truth; which I take to be the grand conclusion to be proved by us.

In fine, if I have brought the point hitherto disputed of so far,

as to make it appear that there are greater and stronger arguments for the belief of our Saviour's resurrection than for the doubting of it (as I hope I have effectually done), I conceive this to be sufficient in reason, to strip men of all justification of their unbelief of the same, and consequently to answer all the great ends of practical religion, the prime business and concern of mankind in this world. Albeit it must be still confessed (as we have noted from Calvin before) that there are several passages relating to this whole matter, neither so demonstrative, nor yet so demonstrable, as might be wished. Nevertheless, since it has pleased almighty God to take this and no other method in this great transaction; I think it the greatest height of human wisdom, and the highest commendation that can be given of it, to acquiesce in what the divine wisdom has actually thought the most fit in this affair to make use of.

And now to close up the whole discourse; with what can we conclude it better, than with a due encomium of the superlative excellency of that mighty grace, which could and did enable the disciples so firmly to believe and so undauntedly to own and attest their belief of their blessed master's resurrection? and that in defiance of the utmost discouragements, which the power, malice, and barbarity of the bitterest enemies could either threaten or encounter human nature with.

And to advance the worth of this faith, if possible, yet higher, we are to know, that it consists not (as has been hinted already) in a bare act of assent or credence, founded in the determining evidence of the object, but attended also with a full choice and approbation of the will; for that otherwise it could not be an act properly free; nor consequently valuable (and much less meritorious) in the esteem of God or man. And therefore some of the ablest of the schoolmen resolve faith, not into a bare credence or act of the understanding only, but also into a pious disposition of the will, preventing, disposing, and, as it were, bending the former, to close in with such propositions as bring with them a suitableness as well as truth; and it is not to be doubted, but inclination gives a powerful stroke and turn towards credence, or assent. So that while truth claims and commands the same, and suitableness only draws and allures it, yet in the issue this obtains it as effectually as even truth itself. Not that I affirm, or judge, that in strictness of reason this ought to be so, but that through the infirmity of reason it is but too manifest, that very often (if not generally) it falls out to be so.

In the mean time we may here see and admire the commanding, and (I had almost said) the meritorious excellency of faith: that while carnal reason argues, sense is stubborn and resists, and many seeming impossibilities occur, it can yet force its way through all such obstacles, and like Lazarus, (though bound hand and foot, as it were,) break even through mortality and death itself.

But as for those whom nothing will satisfy, but such a faith as shall outvie omnipotence itself, by believing more than ever omnipotence can do, I mean contradictions; and especially that grand astonishing one to all human reason, called transubstantiation; we poor Christians, I say, of a much lower form, presume not to aspire to such a pitch and sort of faith; but think it sufficient humbly to own and admire that faith, which the apostle tells us can make its way (through the whole eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews), and that by subduing of kingdoms, putting to flight armies, and not only believing, but also working miracles, and that to such a degree, as even to become a miracle itself. For (as we read there also) it was able to stop the mouths of lions; and, which was more, the mouth of a disputing reason. And certainly that faith, which our Saviour told us could remove mountains, might (had our Saviour but given the word) without the interposal of an angel, have removed also the stone from before the door of the sepulchre, as great as it was.

He who would have a masculine, invincible faith indeed, must in many cases balk his sight, and the further he would leap, the shorter he must look. Christ wrought many of his miraculous cures upon such blind men as believed; and as their faith contributed not a little to the curing of their blindness, so their blindness seemed a no improper emblem of their faith.

For which reason, may not he, who requires no less than a sensible irresistible evidence for all his principles, and not content with a sufficient certainty for the same, will be satisfied with nothing under strict syllogism and demonstration for every article of his creed; may not such a one, I say, be very pertinently and justly replied to, in those words of our Saviour to the Jews, "What do you more than others?" And yet further, would not even the heathens and ancient philosophers have done as much; would not they have believed whatsoever you could have demonstrated to them, allowed you so much persuasion for so much proof, and so much assent for so much evidence? And in a word, would not Aristotle himself have been convinced upon the same terms on which Thomas the disciple was?

But a Christian should go a large step higher and further, read all his *credenda* in an *ἀνθρώπου*, sacrifice even his Isaac, the first-begotten of his reason, and most beloved issue of his brain, whenever God shall think fit to be honoured with such a victim. For such a belief, though it has not the evidence of sight, yet it has all which sight and evidence can be valued for, that is to say, it has something instead of it, and above it too; so that where sense and carnal reason oppose themselves, fly back, and will by no means yield, faith comes in with the demonstration of the Spirit and power, scatters the dark cloud, and clears up all.

And in nothing certainly is the heroic excellency of such an entire submission of our reason to divine revelation so eminently

shown, as in this, that a man hereby ventures himself, and his eternal concerns, wholly upon God's bare word; and questionless nothing can so powerfully engage one of a generous spirit, even amongst men, as an absolute confidence in him, and an unreserved dependence upon him. And if there be any way possible for a creature to oblige his Creator it must be this.

Wherefore let us, in this state of darkness and mortality, rest content to see the great things of our religion but in part, to understand the resurrection but darkly, and to view the rising sun (as I may so express it) but through a crevice; still remembering that God has in this world appointed faith for our great duty, and in the next, vision for our reward.

To which may he, of his infinite mercy, vouchsafe, in his good time, to bring us all; to whom be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON XXI.

OBEDIENCE FOR CONSCIENCE SAKE THE DUTY OF GOOD SUBJECTS.

[Preached at Westminster Abbey, November 5, 1663.]

ROMANS XIII. 5.

Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

THIS chapter is the great and noted repository of the most absolute and binding precepts of allegiance, and seems so fitted to this argument, that it ought to be always preached upon as long as there is either such a thing as obedience to be enjoined, or such a thing as rebellion to be condemned.

In the words that I have pitched upon, there are these two parts:

I. A duty enjoined, "ye must needs be subject."

II. The ground or motive of that duty; "for conscience sake."

I. For the first of these; since men are apt to draw arguments for or against obedience from the qualifications of the persons concerned in it, we will consider here, 1. The persons who are commanded to be subject. 2. The person to whom they are commanded this subjection.

1. For the persons commanded to be subject, they were believers, the faithful, those who were the church of God in Rome, as we see in ch. i. 7, "beloved of God, called to be saints." Neither were they saints only, but saints of the first rank and magnitude, heroes in the faith; verse 8, "Your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." Their faith made Rome no less the metropolis of Christianity, than of the world. The Roman faith and fortitude equally spread their fame. And as the pagan Romans overcame the world by their fortitude, so did the Christians by their faith.

But for the modern Roman saints, it is their powder, not their faith, that has made such a report in the world; a race much different from their primitive ancestors, whose piety could not cancel their loyalty. No religion could sanctify treason; Christian liberty was compatible with the strictest allegiance; they knew no such way as to put the sceptre into Christ's hand, by pulling it out from their prince's.

2. In the next place; the person to whom they were com-

manded to be subject was Nero ; a person so prodigiously brutish, that whether we consider him as a man or as a governor, we shall find him a Nero, that is, a monster, in both respects.

And first, if we consider his person ; he was such a mass of filth and impiety, such an oglio of all ill qualities, that he stands the wonder and the disgrace of mankind. For, to pass over his monstrous obscenity, he poisoned Britannicus for having a better voice ; he murdered his tutor Seneca ; he kicked his wife big with child to death ; he killed his mother, and ripped her up in sport, to see the place where he lay : so impious, that he would adore the statues of his gods one day, and piss upon them another. But then, take him as an emperor, and he was the veriest tyrant and bloodsucker, the most unjust governor that ever the world saw : one, who had proceeded to that enormity, that the very army, the only prop of his tyranny, deserted him ; and the Senate sentenced him to be ignominiously drawn upon a hurdle, and whipped to death.

He who had united in himself the most different and unsociable qualities, namely, to be ridiculous, and to be terrible ; for what more ridiculous than a fiddling emperor, and what more terrible than a bloody tyrant ? In short, he was the plague of the world, the stain of majesty, and the very blush of nature. One, who seemed to be sent and prepared by Providence, to give the world an experiment, *quid summa vitia in summâ fortunâ possint* ; and by a new way of confirmation, to seal to the truth of Christianity, by his hatred of it.

And yet after all this, the believing Romans are commanded subjection even to this Nero, the best of saints to the worst of men : and indeed it was this that gave a value to their obedience ; for to be loyal to a just, gentle, and virtuous prince, is rather privilege than patience. But the reason of the whole matter is stated in these words, verse 1, "The powers that are, are ordained of God." Obedience to the magistrate is obedience to God at the second hand ; and as a man cannot be so wicked, so degenerate, but that still he is a man by God's creation ; so neither can the magistrate be so vile and unjust, but that still he is an officer by God's institution. And it is no small part of the divine prerogative, to be able to command homage to the worst of kings, as the majesty of a prince is never more apparent, than in his subjects' commission to an unworthy deputy or lieutenant. The baseness of the metal is warranted by the superscription, the office hallows the person ; neither is there any reason, that the vileness of one should disannul the dignity of the other ; forasmuch as he is made wicked by himself for the devil, but he is stamped a magistrate by God. We are therefore to overlook all impieties and defects, which cannot invalidate the function. Though Nero deserves worthily to be abhorred, yet still the emperor is and ought to be sacred. And thus much for the duty,

and the persons to whom it relates. "Ye must needs be subject."

II. I come now to the second part, viz., the ground or motive upon which this duty is enforced: "Ye must needs be subject *for conscience sake*." A strange argument, I must confess, if we were to transcribe Christianity from the practice of modern Christians, with whom it would proceed thus rather; ye must needs shake off all government, and rebel for conscience sake. No such instrument to carry on a refined and well-woven rebellion, as a tender conscience and a sturdy heart. He who rebels conscientiously, rebels heartily; such a one carries his god in his scabbard, and his religion upon the point of his sword. He strikes every stroke for salvation, and wades deep in blood for eternity. But what now must be said of those impostors, who in the name of God, and with pretended commissions from heaven, have bewitched men into such a religious rage? who have preached them out of the deadly sin of allegiance, into the angelical state of faction and rebellion; whose saints were never listed but in the muster-roll for the field; and whose rubric is writ only with letters of blood. I believe, upon a due survey of history, it will be found, that the most considerable villanies which were ever acted upon the stage of Christendom, have been authorized with the glistening pretences of conscience, and the introduction of a greater purity in religion. He who would act the destroyer, if he would do it effectually, should put on the reformer; and he who would be creditably and successfully a villain, let him go whining, praying, and preaching to his work; let him knock his breast and his hollow heart, and pretend to lie in the dust before God, before he can be able to lay others there.

But some may reply and argue, that conscience is to be obeyed though erroneous; and therefore, if a saint (for with some all rebels are such) stands fully persuaded in his conscience, that his magistrate is an enemy to the gospel and the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and so ought to be resisted; is not such a one engaged to act according to the dictates of his conscience? And since God would punish him for going against it, is it not high tyranny for the magistrate to punish him for complying with it?

To this I answer, that he who looks well into this argument, looks into the great *arcandum* and the *sanctum sanctorum* of puritanism; which indeed is only reformed Jesuitism, as Jesuitism is nothing else but popish puritanism: and I could draw out such an exact parallel between them, both as to principles and practices, that it would quickly appear, that they are as truly brothers, as ever were Romulus and Remus; and that they sucked their principles from the same wolf.

But to encounter the main body of the argument, which, like

the Trojan horse, carries both arms and armed men in the belly of it; I answer, that to act against conscience, erroneous or not erroneous, is sinful; but then the error adds nothing to the excusableness of the action, when the same charge of sin lies upon the conscience for being erroneous. No man can err in matters of constant duty, which God has laid open to an easy and obvious discernment, but he errs with the highest malignity of wilfulness: and if any plea to the contrary be admitted, it will unhinge all society, and dissolve the bonds of all the governments in the world.

The magistrate is to take no notice of any man's erroneous conscience, but (if reason and religion will not set it right) to rectify or convince it with an axe or the gibbet. He who would without control disturb a government, because his erroneous conscience tells him he must, does all one as if he should say, that it is lawful for a man to commit murder, provided that he who does it be first drunk. It were a sad thing if the laws should be at a stand, and the weal-public suffer, because such and such persons are pleased to be in an error (though by the way they are seldom or never seen to be so, but very beneficially to themselves). He who brings down the law to the exceptions of any man's conscience, does really place the legislative power in that man's conscience; and by so doing, may at length bring down his own neck to the block. For certainly that subject is advanced to a strange degree of power, whose conscience has a prerogative to command the laws.

And I do not think ever to speak a greater truth than this, that the non-execution of the laws upon such hypocrites has been the fatal cause, which drew after it the execution of the supreme legislator himself;* and believe it, if a governor ever falls into the mercy of such persons, he will find that their hands are by no means so tender as their consciences pretend to be. All indulgencies animate such persons, but mend them not: all reconcilements, and little puny arts of accommodation, are but as spiders' webs, which such hornets will quickly break through, and as truces to an old enemy to rally up his forces, and to fall on, when he sees his advantage; nothing will hold a sanctified, tender-conscienced rebel, but a prison or a halter. And these are not angry words, but the oracular responses and bitter truths of a long and bleeding experience; an experience which began in a rebellion against an excellent prince, proceeded to his imprisonment, and concluded in his murder.

But because conscience is a relative term, and so must refer to something which it is to be conversant about, I shall show, that men are commanded a subjection to, and dehorted from a resistance of the civil magistrate, by two things. 1. The absolute unlawfulness; and, 2. The scandal of such a resistance.

* King Charles the First.

1. For the first of these, its *absolute unlawfulness*. Rebellion surely is a mortal sin, mortal to the rebel, and mortal to the prince rebelled against; it is the violation of government, which is the very soul and support of the universe, and the imitation of Providence. Every lawful ruler holds the government by a certain deputation from God; and the commission by which he holds it, is his word. This is the voice of scripture, this is the voice of reason. But yet we must not think to carry it so; for although in the apostles' time this was divinity and truth, yea, and truth also stamped with necessity; yet we have been since taught that kings may be lawfully resisted, cast off, and deposed; and that by two sorts of men. (1.) The sons of Rome; and, (2.) Their true offspring, the sons of Geneva.

(1.) For the first of these. It would be like the stirring of a great sink, which would be likelier to annoy than to instruct the auditory, to draw out from thence all the pestilential doctrines and practices against the royalty and supremacy of princes.

Gratian, in the Decrees, expressly says, *Imperator potest à papâ deponi*. And Boniface VIII. in lib. i. *Extrav. Com. titulo de Majoritate et Obedientiâ*, has declared the subjection, or rather the slavery of princes to the pope fully enough. 1. For first he tells us, that kings and secular powers have the temporal sword, but to be used *ad nutum sacerdotis*. 2. He adds, "Porro subesse Romano pontifici omni humanæ creaturæ, declaramus, dicimus, definimus, et pronuntiamus omnino esse de necessitate salutis."

And how far princes are to be under him we have a further account. 1. They ought to kiss his feet. 2. He may depose them. 3. No prince may repeal his sentence, but he may repeal the sentence of all others. 4. He may absolve subjects from their allegiance. These, and some such other impious positions, they call *dictatus papæ*; and were published and established by Pope Gregory VII. in the Roman synod, in the year one thousand seventy-six, as Baronius tells us, *ad annum Christi millesimum septuagesimum sextum. Numero trices. Imo. et trices. 2do.*

And that we may see that he was not wanting to execute, as much as he had the face to assert, Platina tells us, in his *Life*, how he deposed Henry IV. emperor of Germany; and some of the words of his bull are these: "Henricum imperatoria administratione, regique dejicio. Et Christianos omnes imperio subjectos juramento absolvo." The whole bull is extant in the bullery of Laertius Cherubinus, tom. i. page 12, printed at Rome, 1617. And then at last, with an equal affront to the majesty of scripture, as well as to that of princes, he puts his foot upon the emperor's neck, quoting that passage in the psalms, *Super aspidem et basiliscum*, "Thou shalt tread upon the asp and the basilisk;" a great encouragement surely for princes to turn papists. But to contain ourselves within our own country, where we are most concerned; the pope, we know, deposed King Henry VIII. and Queen

Elizabeth, as far as the words and the *bruta fulmina* of his bulls could depose them; absolving their subjects from their allegiance, and exposing their dominions to the invasion of any who could invade them. The words of Pius V. in his bull against Queen Elizabeth are remarkable; which translated into English, run thus; "Christ, who reigns on high, and to whom all power in heaven and earth is given, has committed the government of the one catholic and apostolic church only to Peter, and his successor the pope of Rome. And him has he placed prince over all nations and kingdoms, to pluck up, destroy, scatter, overturn, plant, and build up; in order to the keeping of God's faithful people in the bond of charity, and in the unity of the Spirit."

And is not this a bold preface, able to blast the prerogative of all kings at a breath? But it is well that cursed bulls have short horns. Yet all this is but the voice of his thunder, the bolt is to come afterwards. Let us see how he proceeds.

"Wherefore," says he, "being upheld in the supreme throne of justice by Christ himself, who has placed us in it, we declare the aforesaid Elizabeth a heretic, and all who adhere to her, to have incurred an anathema, and to be actually divided and cut off from the unity of Christ's body. Moreover we declare her to be deprived of all right to her kingdom, and of all dominion, dignity, and privilege belonging thereto. Withal, that the subjects of that kingdom, and all others, who have any ways sworn obedience to her are fully absolved from their oath, and from all debt of homage and allegiance to her; and accordingly by these presents we do absolve them. Furthermore, we charge and enjoin all her subjects to yield no obedience to her person, laws, or commands. Given at Rome in the year 1575, in the fifth year of the pope's reign, and the thirteenth of Queen Elizabeth's."

It is possible now, that some English and French papists may dislike this doctrine of deposing kings; but they owe this to their own good natures, or some other principle; or indeed chiefly to this, that they live under such kings as will not be deposed. But that they owe it not to their religion, which (by little less than a contradiction in the terms) they miscall *catholic*, is clear from hence: that by the very essential constitution of their faith, they are bound to believe, and to submit both their judgments and practices, to all that is determined by a general council confirmed by the pope. This being premised, we must know, that the fourth Lateran council, which they acknowledge general, and to have had in it above twelve hundred fathers (as they call them) in the third chapter *De Hæreticis*, thus determines: "That all secular powers shall be compelled to take an oath to banish heretics out of their territories. *Moveantur, et, si necesse fuerit, compellantur potestates sæculares, cujuscunque sint officii, ut pro defensione fidei publicè juramentum præstent,*" &c. But what now, if persons will not do this? if they refuse to be thus commanded,

like subjects, and to place their royal diadems upon their bald pates?

Why then the fathers, or rather the lords of the council, thus proceed. "If," say they, "princes refuse to purge their dominions from heresy let this be signified to the pope, that he may forthwith declare their subjects absolved from their allegiance, and expose their territories to be seized upon by catholics."

This is the canon of that *concilium Lateranum magnum* (for so they term it), in which were above twelve hundred fathers (so they tell us), a council by them acknowledged to be general, and confirmed by the pope. Now I demand, is this council infallible, or is it not?

1. If not, then good night to their infallibility, if the pope and twelve hundred fathers, met together in a general council, be not infallible.

2. If it be infallible (as they all do and must say, unless they will deny a fundamental article of their faith), then they must all believe it, and by consequence acknowledge, that the pope has power to excommunicate and depose kings, and to give away their kingdoms, in case of heresy: and what heresy is, they themselves are to be judges? This we may be sure of, that all protestant kings are heretics with them; and so the pope may when he will, and undoubtedly will when he can, give away their kingdoms. I think it concerns kings to consider this, and when they have a mind to submit to the pope's tyranny, to subscribe to the pope's religion.

Thus much for the Lateran council; and to place the argument above all exception, this very council is expressly confirmed by that of Trent, in the 24th Session of Reformation, chap. 5, p. 412, also in the 25th Session about Reformation, chap. 20, p. 624.

Now show me any thorough-paced catholic, who dares refuse to subscribe to the council of Trent; which being so, it is a matter of amazement to consider, that the men of this profession should be of such prodigious impudence, as to solicit any protestant prince for protection, nay, indulgences to their persons and religion; when by virtue of this religion they hold themselves bound, under pain of damnation, to believe those principles as articles of their faith, which naturally undermine, ruin, and eat out the very heart of all monarchy. But if any one should plead favour for them, it is pity but these bulls and decrees, and the Scotch covenant, were all drawn into one system, that so they might be indulged all together, and perhaps in time they may. You have seen here their principles, i. e. you have heard the text, and you need go no further than this fifth of November for a comment.

I could further add, that the popish religion, in the nature of it, is inconsistent with the just rights and supremacy of princes; and that upon this invincible reason, that it exempts all the

clergy from subjection to them, so far, that (be their crimes what they will) kings cannot punish them. For the proof of which, I shall bring that, which is *instar omnium*, and which I am sure they must stand to: viz. the decree of the council of Trent, which in the 24th Session about Reformation, chap. 5, p. 412, determines thus: "*Causæ criminales majores contra episcopos ab ipso tantum summo pontifice Romano cognoscantur et terminentur; minores verò in concilio tantum provinciali cognoscantur et terminentur.*" So that the king, for any thing that he has to do in these matters, may sit and blow his nails; for use them otherwise he cannot. He may indeed be plotted against, have barrels of powder laid, and poniards prepared for him: but to punish the sacred actors of these villanies, that is reserved only to him who gave the first command for the doing them.

These things, I say, I could prosecute much further, but that I am equally engaged by the exigence of my subject, to speak something of their true seed, the sons of Geneva: who, though they seem to be contrary to those of Rome, and like Samson's foxes, to look opposite ways; yet when they are to play the incendiaries, to fire kingdoms and governments, they can turn tail to one and the same firebrand.

In our account of these, we will begin with the father of the faithful; faithful, I mean, to their old antimonarchical doctrines and assertions; and that is the great mufti of Geneva; who, in the fourth book of his Institutions, chap. 20, § 31, has the face to own such doctrine to the world as this; "that it is not only not unlawful for the three estates to oppose their king in the exorbitances of his government (of which they still are to be judges), but that they basely and perfidiously desert the trust committed to them by God, if they connive at him, and do not to their utmost oppose and restrain him."

Let us see this wholesome doctrine and institution further amplified in his commentaries upon Daniel, chap. ii. verse 29. He roundly tells us, "that those men are out of their wits, and quite void of sense and understanding, who desire to live under sovereign monarchies; for that it cannot be (says he) but order and policy must decay, where one man holds such an extent of government."

Upon this good foundation he proceeds further, chap. vi. verse 22: "Princes (says he) when they oppose God" (and oppose God according to him, they do, when they refuse his new discipline), "then (says he) *abdlicant se potestate*, they deprive themselves of all power; and it is better in such cases, to spit in their faces, than to obey them." Yet for all this, Daniel, who surely was as godly a man as Mr. Calvin, did not spit in Nebuchadnezzar's face.

But that we may know when princes oppose God, and so may bring his assertions together, he tells us further, chap. v. ver.

25, "that kings forget that they are men, and of the same mould with others: they are (says he) styled *Dei gratiâ*; but to what sense or purpose, save only to show that they acknowledge no superior upon earth? yet under colour of this, they will trample upon God with their feet; so that it is but an abuse when they are so called." It seems, then, we must lay aside all appellations of honour, and hereafter say only, *Good-man such a one*, king of England, or *Laird such a one*, king of Scotland. But let us follow him a little further; when in the same chapter we shall see him go on thus: "See (says he) what the rage and madness of all kings is, with whom it is a common thing to exclude God from the government of the world." Again, chap. vi. verse 25, "Darius (says he) will condemn by his example all those that profess themselves, at this day, *catholic kings*, *Christian kings*, and *defenders of the faith*; and yet do not only deface and bury all true piety and religion, but corrupt and deprave the whole worship of God."

Could any thing be with greater virulence thrown at all the princes of Christendom, than this; and yet I believe there is never a puritan or dissenter in England, but would lick his spittle in every one of these assertions.

But let us now rally them together into one argument. When princes oppose God, we are not (in Calvin's judgment) to obey them, but to spit in their faces. But now, to exclude God from his government of the world, and to corrupt his whole worship (which he affirms all princes do) is surely to oppose God: and therefore, according to his doctrine, joined with his good manners, we are not to obey them, but to spit in their faces. A doctrine fit only to come from him who nested himself into the chief power of Geneva after the expulsion of the lawful prince.

In the last place, to speak one word of his epistles, which were published by Beza; one who had been a long time licked by him into his own form, and so was likely to do him what advantage he could in their publication: he who shall diligently read them, will find that there was scarce any traitorous design on foot in Christendom, but there are some traces of correspondence with it extant in those epistles.

And so we dismiss him. Beza his disciple succeeds him both in place and doctrine; and to show that he does so, he expressly owns and commends the French rebellion, in his epistle before his Annotations. And in the forty Articles of Berne, published in the year 1574, and drawn up by Beza, in the fortieth article he affirms, "that they were bound not to disarm, so long as their religion was persecuted by the king."

If we would now see how this doctrine grew, being transplanted into Scotland: Knox, in his book to the nobility and people of Scotland, in the point of obedience to kings, instructs them thus: "Neither promise (says he) nor oath can oblige any man to obey,

or give assistance unto tyrants against God." And what tyrants were in his sense, his practices against the queen regent sufficiently show.

In the next place, Buchanan, who was once prolocutor of the Scotch assembly, that is to say, something greater than their king, is copious upon this subject, in his history of Scotland, and in his book *De Jure Regni*, &c. In the former of which, at page 372, he wonders that there is not some public reward appointed for those private men that should kill tyrants, as there is for those that kill wolves. And in his book *De Jure Regni*, he maintains an excellent dispute against such as defend kings. The royal advocates, says he, hold that kings must be obeyed, good or bad. It is blasphemy to affirm that, says Buchanan. But God placeth oftentimes evil kings, say the royal advocates; so doth he often private men to kill them, says Buchanan. But in 1 Tim. we are commanded to pray for princes, say they; so are we commanded to pray for thieves, says he; but yet may hang them up, when we catch them. But, say the royal advocates, St. Paul strictly commands obedience to all princes; St. Paul wrote so, says Buchanan, in the infancy of the church, when they were not able to resist them: but if he had lived now, he would have written otherwise.

Now, if this be their prolocutor's doctrine, I leave it to any one to judge, whether every king has not cause to take up those words of Jacob to Simeon and Levi, with a little change; "O my soul, come not thou into their secret, and unto their general assembly, mine honour, be not thou united!"

But that we may come home to the very place of my text, I shall produce one more of them, and that is Pareus; a German divine, but fully cast into the Geneva mould. He in his comment upon Romans xiii., full fraught with a pestilent discourse against the sovereignty of kings, assigns several cases in which their subjects may lawfully take up arms against them, page 1338. As 1. "If their prince blasphemeth God, or causes others to do so. 2. If he does them some great injury:" his words are, *Si fiat ipsis atrox injuria*. "3. If they cannot otherwise enjoy their lives, estates, and consciences." Now with all these large conditions, still join this, that themselves are to be judges in all these cases against their prince; and then, if they have but a mind to rebel, they may blame themselves, if they are to seek for a lawful cause. This made king James award this worthy piece to the fire and the hangman. A prince, who though bred up under puritans, yet hated their opinions heartily, because he understood them thoroughly.

And now, last of all, as it is the nature of dregs and the worst part of things, to descend to the bottom, it were easy to bring up the rear with our English Genevizers, and to show how these doctrines of disloyalty to princes have thriven amongst them; were

it not impertinent to think that you could be further instructed by hearing that for an hour, that you have felt for twenty years. And here, by the way, it is a glorious justification of the church of England, still to have had the same enemies with the monarchy of England. For an account of their tenets, I shall not send you to their papers, to their sermons, though some of the greatest blots to Christianity next to their authors; but I shall send you to the field, to the high courts of justice, where they stand writ to eternity in the massacre of thousands, in the blood and banishment of princes; actions that much outdo the business of this present anniversary; but to be buried in silence, because not to be reprehended with safety.

However, as for puritanism, since it had so long deceived the world with a demure face, I have been often prone to think that it was in some respect a favour of Providence, to let it have its late scope and range, to convince and undeceive Christendom, and by an immortal experiment to demonstrate, whither those principles tend, and what a savage monster puritanism, armed with power, would show itself to the world.

So that if any Christian prince should hereafter forget the English rebellion and himself, so far as to be deceived with those stale, threadbare, baffled pretences of conscience and reformation, he would fall in a great measure unpitied, as a martyr to his senseless fondness, and a sacrifice to his own credulity.

As for those amongst us, they are of that incorrigible, impregnable malice, that, forgetting all their treasons, they have made the king's oblivion the chief subject of their own; and rewarding all his unparalleled mercies with continual murmurs, libels, plots, and conspiracies, seem only to be pardoned into fresh treasons, and indemnified into new rebellions.

We have seen here the adversaries which this great duty of allegiance to kings has on both sides: which that we may enforce against all arts of evasion, which the papist and puritan, the mortal, sworn, covenanted enemies of all magistracy, but especially of monarchy, can invent, it will be expedient briefly to discuss this question:

Whether, and how far, human laws bind the conscience?

To the determination of which, if we would proceed clearly and rationally, we must first state what it is to bind the conscience. To bind the conscience, therefore, is so to oblige a man to the performance of a thing, that the non-performance of it brings him under the guilt of sin, and liableness to punishment before God.

Now to proceed. Some are of opinion, that human laws oblige only to the penalty annexed to the violation of them; and that the conscience contracts the guilt of no sin before God; a man's person being only subject to the outward penalties, which the civil magistrate shall inflict for the expiation of his offence.

But the confutation of this opinion I need fetch no further than from the text. For I demand of the most subtle expositor and acute logician in the world, what sense he will make here of the words, "for conscience sake;" if by conscience is not meant conscience of sin, but only of liableness to punishment before the magistrate.

For then the sense of the words will be this: "You must needs be subject, not only for wrath," that is, for fear of punishment; "but also for conscience sake," that is, for fear of punishment too; since, according to them, the term, for conscience sake, referred to the laws of the civil magistrate, can signify no more. But this is so broad a depravation of the rules of speaking, that it banishes all sense and reason from the whole scheme and construction of the words.

To the whole matter, therefore, I answer by a distinction.

(1.) That a law may bind the conscience, either immediately, by virtue of its own power conveyed to it by its immediate legislator. Or,

(2.) Mediatly, in the strength of a superior law, owning and enforcing the obligation of the inferior.

This distinction premised: I affirm, that the laws of man neither do nor can immediately bind the conscience; that is, by themselves, or by any obliging power transfused into them from the human legislator. That this is so, I demonstrate upon these reasons.

(1.) No power can oblige any further than it can take cognizance of the offence, and inflict penalties, in case the person obliged does not answer the obligation, but offends against it. This proposition stands firm upon this eternal truth; that nothing can be an obligation that is absurd and irrational. But it is absurd for any power to give laws and obligations to that of which it can take no account, nor possibly know whether it keeps or transgresses those laws, and which, upon its transgression of them, it cannot punish.

But what man alive, what judge or justice, what Minos or Rhadamanthus, can carry his inspection into the conscience? What evidence, what witness, or rack, can extort a discovery of that which the conscience is resolved to conceal, and keep within itself? Nay, admit that it were possible to force it to such confessions against itself; yet what penalty could human force, and the short reach of the secular arm, inflict upon a spiritual, immaterial substance? which defies all our engines of torment, and arts of cruelty; which laughs at all the hostilities and weak invasions of all the elements. Conscience is neither scorched with the fire nor pricked with the sword; it feels nothing under a Deity, nothing but the stings and insinuations of an angry, sin-revenging Omnipotence.

(2.) A second reason is this: That if human laws, considered

in themselves, immediately bind the conscience, then human laws, as such, carry in them as great an obligation as the divine. The consequence is most clear; for the divine law can do no more than bind the conscience; the nature of man not being capable of coming under greater obligation. But now a law can have no more force or power in it, than what it receives from the legislator; and since the obliging force of it follows the proportion of his power and prerogative; to affirm that any sanction of man has the same binding force and sacred validity that the laws of God have, amounts to a blasphemous equalling of him who is a worm and a pitiful nothing, to him who is God blessed for ever.

Let these arguments suffice to demonstrate, that human laws cannot of themselves, and by any power naturally inherent in them, immediately bind the conscience. But then, in the next place, I add, that it is as certain, that every human law enjoining nothing sinful or wicked, really binds the conscience, by virtue of a superior obligation superadded to it, from the injunction and express mandate of the divine law, which commands subjection to the laws and ordinances of the civil magistrate; whether of the king as supreme, or of such as be his vicegerents and deputed officers.

And thus to assert, that human laws have the same obligation with divine, is neither absurd nor blasphemous; forasmuch as this is not affirmed to be by any prerogative immanent in themselves, but derivative, and borrowed from the divine. As it is not either treason or impropriety to affirm, that the word of the constable obliges as much as the word of the king, when the king commands that his constable's word, in such or such matters, should be as much obeyed as his own.

Having thus therefore, by a due and impartial distribution, assigned to God the prerogative of God, and to Cæsar the prerogative that is Cæsar's; and withal pitched the obligation of human laws upon so firm and so unshakeable a basis; we shall pass from the first ground, upon which obedience to the civil magistrate is enforced, namely, conscience of the unlawfulness of resisting it; and proceed to the

2. With which I shall conclude. And that is, *conscience of the scandal* of such a resistance; which surely is an argument to such whose principles are not scandalous. How tender does St. Paul, in all his epistles, show himself of the repute of Christianity: and what stress does he still lay upon this one consideration! 1 Thess. iv. 12, "I beseech you, that ye walk honestly towards them that are without." And in 2 Cor. vi. 3, "Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed." And surely, could we strip rebellion of the sin, yet this would be argument enough against it; that it gives the enemies of Christianity cause to blaspheme, and with some show of reason decry and reject that excellent profession.

How impossible had it been for the Christian religion to have made such a spread in the world, at least ever to have gained any countenance from the civil power, had it owned such anti-magistratical assertions, either by its own avowed principles, or by the practices of its primitive professors?

And very probable it is, that at this very day, the most potent enemy it has in the world, which is the Mahometan, takes up his detestation of it in a great measure from his observance of those many rebellions, wars, tumults, and confusions, that have so much and so particularly infested Christendom.

For may he not naturally argue,—Can that religion be true or divine, that does not enforce obedience to the magistrate? Or can that do so, whose loudest professors are so rebellious? Is it not rational to imagine, that the religion men profess will have a suitable influence upon their practice? Are not actions the genuine offspring of principles? I wish that answer would satisfy the world, that must satisfy us, because we have no better; that Christians live below Christianity, and by their lives contradict their profession.

In the mean time, let those incendiaries, those spiritual Abaddons, whose doctrine, like a scab or leprosy, has overspread the face of Christianity, and whose tenets are red with the blood of princes; let such, I say, consider what account they will give to God for that scandal and prejudice, that they have brought upon so pure and noble a religion, that can have no other blemish upon it in the world, but that such persons as they profess it.

If they had but any true ingenuity (a principle much lower than that of grace), surely it would tie up their consciences from those infamous exorbitancies, that have given such deep gashes, such incurable wounds to their religion. For shall Christ have bled once for our sins, and shall Christian religion bleed always by our practices? I could now beseech such by the mercies of God and the bowels of Christ,—did I think this would move those who have torn in pieces the body of Christ,—that they would bind up the broken reputation of Christianity, by showing henceforth, that subjection is part of their religion: that they would reflect upon the desolations they have made, with one eye, and upon their great exemplar with the other; remembering him who, while he conversed upon earth, was subject to the civil power in his own person, and commanded subjection to it by his precepts. So that what was said of Christ in respect of the law of Moses, may be equally said of him in reference to the laws of the magistrate, that “he came not to destroy, but to fulfil.”

SERMON XXII.

MAN'S INABILITY TO FIND OUT GOD'S JUDGMENTS.

[Preached at Westminster Abbey, on the twenty-ninth of May, 1672; being the Anniversary Festival appointed by Act of Parliament for the happy Restoration of King Charles II.]

ROMANS XI. 33, latter part.

How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

THAT which first brought both a present guilt, and entailed a future curse upon mankind, was an inordinate desire of knowledge. And from the fall of Adam, to this very day, this fatal itch has stuck so close to our nature, that every one of his succeeding race is infinitely eager, inquisitive, and desirous to know and judge, where he is called only to adore and to obey. By which we see, that it was this restless appetite of knowing, which made the earliest and boldest encroachment upon the divine prerogative; setting man up not only as a rebel, but also as a rival to his Maker; and from behaving himself as his creature, encouraging him to become his competitor. For there appears not the least inducement to the breach of this command of God, from any pretence of the unreasonableness or difficulty of it, but merely because it was a command; it obliged, and therefore was to be broken or shaken off. So that upon the whole matter, it was not so much the taking beauties of the forbidden tree, as its being forbidden, which stirred the unruly humour, gave relish to the fruit, and force to the temptation. And could there be a higher and more direct defiance of the Almighty, under the peculiar character of Lord and Governor of the universe, than to have the very reason of his subject's obedience turned into an argument for his rebellion? to see a pitiful short-sighted creature prying into the reserves of Heaven: and one who was but dust in his constitution, and of a day's standing at most, aspiring to an equality with his Creator in one of his divinest perfections? All know, that even in human governments, there is hardly any one of them but must have its *arcana imperii*, its hidden rules and maxims, which the subjects of it must by no means be acquainted with, but yield to their force, without examining their contrivance (the very ignorance of them being the chief cause that the generality are governed by them). And if so, how much a more unpardonable absurdity,

as well as insolence, must it needs be for those, who commonly stand at so great a distance, even from the little intrigues and mysteries of human policies, to say like their grand exemplar and counsellor Lucifer, "I will ascend and look into the secrets of the Most High," rip up and unravel all the designs and arts of Providence in the government of the world; as if, forsooth, they were of the cabinet to the Almighty, were privy to all his decrees, and, in a word, held intelligence with his omniscience. For no less than all this was or could be implied in our first parents affecting to be as gods; the main thing which, by the advice of the serpent, they were then so set upon, and so furiously desirous of.

Whereas, on the contrary, that great repository of all truth and wisdom, the scripture, is in nothing more full and frequent, than in representing the infinite transcendency of God's ways and actings above all created intellectuals. "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me," says David, Psalm cxxxix. 6; and, "Thy judgments are a great deep," Psalm xxxvi. 6; and, "God has put darkness under his feet," Psalm xviii. 9; and, "His ways are in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known," Psalm lxxvii. 19. In all which passages could any thing be expressed with more life and emphasis? For he who treads upon the waters leaves no impression; and he who walks in the dark falls under no inspection. There is still a cloud, a thick cloud, about God's greatest and most important works; and a cloud, we know, is both high and dark, it surpasses our reach and determines our sight; we may look upon it, but it is impossible for us to look through it. In a word, if we consult either the reports of scripture, or of our own experience, about the wonderful, amazing events of providence, especially in the setting up or pulling down of kings and kingdoms, transplanting churches, destroying nations, and the like; we shall find the result of our closest reasonings, and most exact inquiries, concluding in an humble nonplus and silent submission to the overpowering truth of this exclamation of our apostle; "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

The glorious subject of this day's commemoration is an eminent and bright instance of the methods of Providence surpassing all human apprehension or conceit: and as it is a very great one itself, so it was brought forth by a numerous train of other providential passages altogether as great, whether we respect the quality of the actions themselves, or the strangeness of the effects. My business therefore shall be, from so notable a theme, to read men a lecture of humility; and that in a case in which they seldom do (and yet have all the reason in the world to) show it; to wit, in taking a due estimate of the proceedings of Almighty God, especially in his winding and turning about the great affairs of states and nations; and therein to demonstrate, what weak,

purblind expositors we are of what is above us; how unfit to arraign and pass sentence upon that Providence that overrules us in all our concerns; and in a word, to turn interpreters where we understand not the original. It is, no doubt, an easy matter to gaze upon the surface and outside of things. But few, who see the hand of the clock or dial can give a reason of its motion; nor can the case of the watch (though never so finely wrought) be any rule to judge of the artificial composure and exact order of the work within.

Now he who would pass a clear, firm, and thorough judgment upon any action, must be able to give an account of these two things belonging to it; viz.

I. From what cause or reason it proceeds.

II. To what event or issue it tends.

In both which respects I shall demonstrate, that the sublimest and most advanced wisdom of man is an incompetent judge of the ways of God. And,

I. For the *reason or cause of them*. Men are so far from judging rightly of the passages of Providence, that the causes they assign of them are for the most part false; but always imperfect.

And first for the false ones; these (or some of them at least) are such as follow.

1. That the prosperous and happy in this life are the proper objects of God's love; and the miserable and calamitous, of his hatred; a blessed doctrine doubtless, and exactly according to that of Mahomet, even the very marrow and spirit of the Alcoran, and the prime and topping article, or rather sum total of the Ottoman divinity. But such, we see, is the natural aptness of men to bring down God to their own measures, and to ascribe only those methods to him, which they first transcribe and copy from themselves. For they know well enough how they treat one another, and that all the hostility of a man's actions presupposes and results from a much greater in his affections; so that the hand is never lifted up to strike, but as it is commanded by the heart that hates. And accordingly, let any notable calamity or distress befall any one (and especially if maligned by us), and then how naturally do there start up, in the minds of such Mahometan Christians, such reasonings as these: "Can so beneficent a being as God be imagined to torment in love? to kill with kindness? or does the noise of his blows and the sounding of his bowels speak the same thing?" No, by no means. And therefore when any one chances to be cut off by the stroke of some severe providence, no sooner has God done execution, but the malice of men presently passes sentence, and, by a preposterous proceeding, the man is first executed, and afterwards condemned, and so dies not

for being a criminal, but passes for a criminal for being put to death.

Many remarkable instances of which have been in the late times of confusion; in which, when a violent faction had, by perjury and rebellion, and success in both, rode triumphant over the best of kings, the loyalest of subjects, and the justest of causes that was ever fought for; how then was the black decree of reprobation opened and let fly at them, both from pulpit and from press, and how were all the vials of wrath in the Revelation poured down upon their heads! Every mother's son of them was a reprobate and a castaway, and none to hope for the least favour hereafter, who had not Cromwell or Bradshaw for his friend here. And as for the poor oppressed episcopal clergy of our church, I myself, in those blessed times, have heard one of their leading doctors, or rather pulpit officers, thus raving against them, in a sermon in the University; "See (says he) those of the late hierarchy (as they called themselves) how God for their uselessness has wholly laid them aside, with a design never to use them more." But why never? Could the man of prophecy be sure of this, when the year sixteen hundred and sixty was then so near? or did God then so wonderfully restore the church and clergy for no other end than to make no further use of them for ever? or does he do miracles only to make sport for the world? But so full were these sons of arrogance and imposture of the prophetic spirit (true or false it mattered not, so long as it served a turn), that in time, with the help of a little more confidence and less sense (if possible), they might have set up for the writing of almanacs, and even vied with their oracle Lilly himself, in his famous predictions of the glories of a deposed pitiful protector, not able to protect himself.

Nor were these enthusiasts less liberal in denouncing God's curses upon their enemies, than in engrossing his blessings to themselves. There being none of those reforming harpies, who, by plunders and sequestrations, had scraped together three or four thousand a year, but presently (according to the sanctified dialect of the times) they dubbed themselves God's peculiar people and inheritance; so sure did those thriving regicides make of heaven, and so fully reckoned themselves in the high road thither, that they never so much as thought, that some of their saintships were to take Tyburn in their way.

Thus we see how those saucy arbitrators upon and dispensers of God's judgments took upon them to distribute life and death, election and reprobation, at their pleasure. And all this in direct contradiction to, or rather defiance of, the Spirit of God himself (so impudently pretended to by these impostors all along); who, as positively as words can express a thing, in Eccles. ix. 1, assures us, that "no man knows either love or hatred by all that is before him;" nor consequently can con-

clude himself in favour or out of favour with almighty God by any thing befalling him in this life; indeed, no more than he can read the future estate of his soul in the lines of his face, or the constitution of his body in the colour of his clothes. For should the quality of a man's condition here determine the happiness or misery of it hereafter, no doubt Lazarus would have been in the flames, and the rich man in Abraham's bosom. But the next life will open us a very different scene from what we see in this, and show us quite another face of things and persons from that which dazzles and deludes men's eyes at present; it being the signal and peculiar glory of the day of judgment, that it will be the great day of distinction, as well as retribution. But in the mean time, does not common experience undeniably convince us, that God sometimes curses men even with prosperity, confounds them in the very answer of their prayers, and, as it were, chokes them with their own petitions? Does he not, as he did formerly to the Israelites, at the same time put flesh into their craving mouths, and send leanness withal into their souls? And is there any thing more usually practised in the world, than for men to caress, compliment, and feast their mortal enemies? persons whom they equally hate and are hated by? While, on the other side, as a father chides, frowns upon, and lashes the child whom he dearly loves (his bowels all the time yearning while his hand is striking), so how common is it in the methods of divine love, for God to cast his Jobs upon dunghills; to banish into wildernesses, and so sell his most beloved Josephs into slavery and captivity; and, in a word, to discipline and fit them for himself by all that is harsh and terrible to human nature? And still there is nothing but love and designs of mercy at the bottom of all this: "Thy rod and thy staff," says David, "comfort me," Psalm xxiii. 4; that is, with his staff he supports, and with his rod he corrects, but still with both he comforts.

Now, though I think it is sufficiently manifest to the impartial and judicious, that neither the sufferings of our prince or his loyal subjects were any arguments of God's hatred of them; yet I hope his restoration was an effect of God's love to these poor harassed kingdoms; I say, I hope so; for our great ingratitude, sensuality, and raging impiety, ever since our deliverance, makes me far from being confident, that what was in itself incomparably the greatest of earthly blessings, may not be made the fatal means to sink us lower, and damn us deeper, than any sins committed by us under the rod of the usurpers could have done. This is certain, that God may outwardly deliver us, and yet never love us; he may "turn our very table into a snare." And I know no certain mark or criterion whereby we may infallibly conclude that God did the glorious work which we celebrate this day, out of love to us, but only this one, that we become holier and better by it than before. But if it should

prove otherwise, will it not rank us with the hardened and incorrigible, whose infidelity such miracles could not cure, and whose obstinacy such mercies could not melt down? and having upon both accounts done so much for us to so little purpose, resolve never to do more? And thus much for the first false cause, commonly assigned by confident and conceited men, of the dealings of God's providence, namely, God's love or hatred of the persons upon whom they pass. But,

2. Another false cause, from which men derive the different proceedings of Providence, is, the different merit of the persons so differently treated by it: and from hence still supposing, that the good only must prosper and the bad suffer; they accordingly from men's prosperity conclude their innocence, as from their sufferings their guilt. A most absurd assertion certainly: for if men's happiness and misery in this world (of which only we now speak) be measured out to them according to their goodness or badness respectively, how infinitely vain and senseless must that old and celebrated question, *Cur bonis male et malis bene?* needs have been; when, according to the aforesaid doctrine, the very subject of this question is quite taken away, and a man's happiness as necessarily presupposes his goodness, and his misery his sin or wickedness, as in the natural course of things the consequent does and must the antecedent. And therefore so far has this opinion been from obtaining with the more sober and knowing part of mankind, that there has hardly been any age of the world, in which the said question has not exercised the minds of some of the wisest and best men in it; and that to such a degree, that it has proved a constant stumblingblock to most, and of all temptations to infidelity the strongest and most hardly conquered. For it was this which so staggered David himself, that he confesses that "his feet had well nigh slipped," Psalm lxxiii. 2: and so confounded the prophet Jeremiah, Jer. xii. 1, that he could almost have offered to dispute the point with God himself; so utterly puzzled and distracted were these great men, till religion came in to their aid, and unriddled what philosophy could not solve; and faith cut asunder what reason could not untie. And from the same topic it was that Job's friends argued, and that with such assurance, that one would have thought that they took all that they said for demonstration; but how falsely and rashly they did so, appears from the verdict passed by God himself upon the whole matter, both rejecting their persons and condemning their reasonings, by a severe remark upon the presumption of the one, and the inconsequence of the other. For where the rule is crooked, how can the line drawn by it be straight? It is most true, that there is no man (our blessed Saviour only excepted) who either does or ever did suffer, but was more or less a sinner before he was a sufferer: and consequently, that there is ground enough in every man, to

make God's infliction of the greatest evil upon him just; and yet I affirm, that a man's sin is not always the reason of his sufferings, though sinfulness be still the qualification of his person: but the reason of those must be fetched from some other cause. For the better understanding of which we must observe, that God may, and sometimes actually does, deal with men under a double capacity or relation, viz. 1. as an absolute Lord; and 2. as a judge or governor. The rule which he proceeds by as an absolute Lord, is his sovereign will and pleasure; and the rule which he acts by as a judge, is his justice and his law. Now, though under the former notion God does not properly exercise or exert his justice, yet he cannot therefore be said to do any thing unjustly; it being one thing for God barely not to exercise an attribute in such or such a particular action, and another to oppose, or do any thing contrary to the said attribute. The former of which is usual, and fairly agreeable with the old economy of his attributes, but the latter is impossible.

Accordingly, in the various dispensations befalling the sons of men, we find, how naturally prone the world has been all along to state the different usages of men's persons upon the difference of their deserts. As when Pilate mingled the Galileans' blood with their sacrifices, there were enough ready to conclude those poor Galileans sinners above all other Galileans, for their suffering such things; but our Saviour quickly reverses the sentence; and assures them that the consequence was by no means good, Luke xiii. 1, 2. And on the other hand, the Israelites, from the many miraculous works done for them, and blessings heaped upon them by the divine bounty, concluded themselves holier and more righteous than all the nations about them; but we find both Moses in Deut. ix., and the psalmist in Psalm lxxviii., roundly telling them, that there was no such thing, but that they were a rebellious, ungrateful, stiffnecked people from the very first: and for ought appears from history to the contrary, have continued so ever since. And to proceed further, did not the righteous providence of God bring down most of the potentates of the eastern world under the feet of that monster of tyranny and idolatry, Nebuchadnezzar; and that while he was actually reigning in his sins, with as high a hand as he did or could do over any of those poor kingdoms who had been conquered or enslaved by him? So that in the Song of the Three Children (as it is called), then the objects of his brutish fury, Azarias emphatically complains, that God had not only deserted his people, but delivered them into the hands of "the most unjust and wicked king in all the world." These were the words, verse 9, and this the character of that *flagellum Dei*, that scourge of nations, notable for nothing great or extraordinary recorded of him, but sin and success. In like manner, did not the same Providence make most of the crowns and sceptres of the earth bend to the

Roman yoke?*

The greatness of which empire was certainly founded upon as much injustice, rapine, and violence, as could well be practised by men; though still couched and carried on under the highest pretence of justice and honour (set off with the greatest show of gravity besides), even while the said pretences, in the sight of the whole world, were impudently outfaced by the quite contrary practices; as appears in particular from that scandalous case of the Mamertines, and the assistance they gave those thieves and murderers, against all the law of nations and humanity itself, only to serve a present interest against the Carthaginians. And lastly, what a torrent of success attended the Turks, till they had overrun most of the earth, and the whole Greek church and empire? And yet the notorious governing qualities which these barbarians acted and grew up by, both in war and peace, were the height of cruelty and treachery; qualities of all other the most abhorred by God and man, and such as we may be sure could never induce God to abandon so great a part of Christendom (which yet in his judgment he has actually done) to so base a people and so false a religion. And now, notwithstanding such flagrant examples of thriving impiety, carrying all before it, we see how apt the world is still to make Providence steer by man's merit. And as we have given instances of this in nations, so we want not the like in particular persons; amongst which we have not a more remarkable exemplification of the case now before us, than in the person of St. Paul, and the judgments the barbarians passed upon him, Acts xxviii. 4, 5, 6. For as soon as they saw the viper fastening upon his hand, they pronounced him a murderer; and presently again, as soon as he shook it off and felt no hurt, they looked upon him as a god; that is, in a minute's time, from one "not worthy to live" (as they had said), they advanced him to the condition of one not able to die. Thus we see how they declared their judgment of both these passages, and of one no doubt as wisely as the other. In like manner, is a man brought under any signal and unusual calamity? Why then to the question: Was it his own personal guilt, or that of his family, which consigned him over to it? Or, in other words, "Did the man himself sin, or his parents," that he was plundered, sequestered, imprisoned, and at length sworn out of his estate and life? Much the like question, we know, was proposed to our Saviour himself, in John ix. 2, 3, and that upon the account of as great a misery befallen a man, as could be well incident to human nature. And the answer he gave it (stating the whole reason of the evil suffered, upon the sole will of the inflicter, without the least regard to any gift in the sufferer) stands upon record as an everlasting reprimand to all such queries and reflections. So that should Providence at any time strip a man of his estate, his honour, or high place, this must presently stamp

* See Dr. Arthur Duck's Book *De Usu et Autoritate Juris Civilis Romanorum*.

him a reprobate or castaway; or rather, according to the divine philosophy of our Saviour's forementioned answer, teach us that God, who perfectly knew the temper and circumstances of the man, knew also, that a mean and a low condition would place him nearer to him (as much a paradox as it may seem) than the highest and most magnificent. Another man perhaps is snatched away by a sudden or untimely, a disastrous or ignominious death; but must I therefore pass sentence upon him out of Daniel, or the Revelation, or charge him with some secret guilt, as the cause of it: as if a fever or an apoplexy were not sufficient, without the concurring plague and poison of a malicious tongue, to send a man a packing out of this world; or, as if any death could be so violent, or distemper so mortal and malign, but that it may and does carry some into a better world, as well as others into a worse? But be the course of Providence never so unaccountable, and contrary to my notions, ought I to descant upon any act of it, while I am wholly ignorant of the purpose which directed it? Or shall I confess the ways of God to be "unsearchable and past finding out," and at the same time attempt to give a reason of them, and so to the arrogance join the contradictions? Such methods certainly are equally senseless and irreligious.

But of all the examples producible of impudent and perverse judging, there can hardly be any one parallel to what passed upon the sufferings of the late king of blessed and glorious memory, king Charles I., whose genealogies of family guilt, besides personal, have been charged upon his royal head; as if he had come, not only to the throne, but also to the block by inheritance. But as that excellent prince was an eminent instance of the censorious venom of men's tongues in matters of this nature, so we need go no further for a proof of the falseness and fallaciousness of this rule of judging, than to the same royal martyr; for was there ever any prince more unfortunate, and yet ever any more virtuous? Who could have imagined, that so much true piety, so much innocence, so much justness and tenderness of his subjects' lives and properties, so much temperance and restraint of himself in all the affluence and prosperities of a long-flourishing court, so much patience and submission to the hand of God in his sharpest adversities, and, in a word, such a union of all moral perfections as scarce ever met in any prince, or indeed in any mere man but himself; who, I say, that should measure out men's fortunes by their merit, could have imagined, that all these heights of virtue and Christianity should only prepare the princely owner of them to fall a sacrifice to the evil of his enemies, in the most cruel, barbarous, and savage manner, that perhaps any crowned head ever fell before? And will any one after this pretend to give an account of the proceedings of Providence from the guilt or innocence of persons, when King Charles I. was imprisoned, spit upon, arraigned, and cut off by an infamous sentence, as a tyrant,

traitor, murderer, and public enemy, before the gates of his own palace? And that miscreant, who was the prime actor in all this woful tragedy (a piece of dirt soaked in blood, as it was said of Nero with much less cause) should usurp the sceptre, and invade the throne of his royal master, reign successfully, and die in peace? if he could be said to die in peace, who lived in perpetual war with his own conscience: the only enemy which would never make peace with him, whatsoever his dastardly, mean-spirited neighbours did.

Histories inform us of many worthy and brave persons brought to unworthy ends; any one of which were enough to rebuke the proneness of the world to judge of the causes of God's dealing with men from any qualifications in the persons so dealt with. But certainly if we consider the peculiar strangeness of the forementioned case, with the appendage of all its circumstances, so long as the memory of king Charles I. lasts (as I hope it will not only last, but flourish also, to the world's end), it will be impossible for us to be convinced by a higher argument, or a more amazing matter of fact, that "God judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out." And therefore till our bold magisterial dispensers of God's judgments can give us a satisfactory account of the foregoing particulars, from some clear and undoubted principle of reason or revelation; let them stand off and adore in silence, without presuming to judge, and much less to condemn, having, as it is manifest, no more ability for the one, than authority for the other. And thus, as we have given proof more than enough of men's utter unfitness to sound the depths of God's providential dealings with them upon this account, that they usually ascribe them to false causes; so in the

Second place, the same will appear yet further from this: that they always resolve them into imperfect causes. Who would assign an adequate reason of any thing which God does, must see as far into it as God sees. And there is scarce any extraordinary passage of providence, which does not point at least a thousand years forward, and stretch itself more than a thousand miles about; so that a man must be able to take into his mind all that long train and wide compass of purposes to which it may subserve, and all those influences which it may cast upon things vastly remote in place and distant many ages in time: which it is impossible for any created intellect to have a clear prospect into or comprehension of. There is no action of God, but there is a combination of impulsive causes concerned in it; one or two of which possibly the wit of man may sometimes light upon, but the shortness or weakness of his discerning powers keeps him inevitably a stranger to far the greater part of them. God, by one and the same numerical lot of providence, may intend to punish one nation to advance another: to plant the gospel in a third, and to let it trade into a fourth; likewise to make way for the happiness of one man's posterity, and for the extinction

and razing out of another's; to reward the virtues of a sober and industrious people, and to revenge the crimes of a slothful and a vicious, a perjured and a rebellious,* with innumerable other designs, which God may actually propose to himself in every single passage of his transactions with men; and which we are no more fit or able to search into or arbitrate upon, than we are to govern the world.

And thus much for the first general argument, proving the insufficiency of any human wisdom to interpret the actions of Providence, taken from its inability truly and thoroughly to pierce into the reasons of them; which as it must always make one considerable ingredient in passing a right judgment upon any action, so I show that there was another also required, namely, a certain prospect into the utmost issue or event of the same. Upon which account also

II. Man's unfitness to judge of the proceedings of Providence shall be now made out to us, by considering those false rules and grounds by which men generally forejudge of the *issue* and *event* of actions: as,

1. Men usually prognosticate the event of any thing or action according to the measure of the prudence, wisdom, and policy of second agents immediately engaged in it. And it must be confessed, that it is the best and likeliest rule that they have to judge by, were it not controlled by two better and likelier, and from which there can lie no appeal, viz. scripture and experience. The former of which brings in God laughing at the wisdom of the wise; taking and circumventing the crafty in their own wiles, Job v. 12, 13; baffling the subtle and shrewd advices of Balaam and Ahitophel, and so stifling both counsel and counsellor in a noose of his own making. And for the latter, history so abounds with instances of the most refined customs and artificially-spun contrivances dashed in pieces by some sudden and unforeseen accidents, that to ascertain the event of the most promising undertaking, if we trust but our own eyes, we shall have little cause to trust to another's wisdom.

2. Men usually prognosticate the success of any project or design, from success formerly gained under the same or less probable circumstances. And the argument seems to proceed à *majori ad minus*; as, that if a man could conquer and break through a greater difficulty, much more may he presume, that he shall be able to master and evade through a less. And perhaps the ratiocination, according to the bare natural consequences of things, is true and good. Nevertheless it is manifest that men frequently miscarry in the application of it; and several reasons may be given for their doing so. As, 1. It is hard, and perhaps

* No nation certainly, at this time, is further in debt to God's justice, than the English.

scarce possible (whatsoever less observing minds may imagine to the contrary) to repeat and exemplify any action, under perfectly the same circumstances. 2. That in most actions there are still some circumstances not observed or taken notice of, which may have a surer and more immediate influence upon the event of those actions, than those circumstances which, coming more into view, are more depended upon. But, 3. And chiefly, because the success of every action depends more upon the secret hand of God, than upon any causes or instruments visibly engaged in it. Take an instance or two of this. It was easy and natural enough to conclude, that Hannibal, having so worsted the Roman armies while they were in their fresh strengths and full number, should have been much abler to crush the same enemy under all those disadvantages, which such great and frequent defeats must needs have brought upon them. And yet we find Fabius and Marcellus, after some time, wonderfully turning the stream of his conquests, and Scipio, at length, totally subduing him. In like manner, if a nation, under a usurped government, disunited in itself, and in continual danger of commotions at home, as well as of enemies from abroad, was yet an overmatch to its neighbour nation in a war against it; it seems rational and probable enough to infer from thence, that the same nation settled under an unquestionably legal government, and free from any disturbances within itself, should be much more likely (especially under the same conduct) to cope with and subdue the same enemy. And yet we find, that the premises taken up from our naval successes in the years 1652 and 1653, produced but a poor conclusion in our contest with the same adversary, in the years 1666 and 1667; when we were so shamefully insulted upon our coasts, and our noblest ships fired in our harbours. And the cause of this seems not so much derivable from any failure either of the English courage or conduct at sea, as from the secret judgments of God (much the greater deep of the two). So that it is clear, that this rule also, of gathering the future success of actions, is weak and fallacious: and that in some sorts of events, after things have been contrived and put together with the utmost exactness, a link or two of the chain happening to break, the coherence of the whole is hereby dissolved; and then, how fairly soever the antecedent may have promised us, we shall yet in the close of all find ourselves lurch'd of the consequent.

3. Men generally measure the issue and success of any enterprise, according to the preparations made for it, and the power employed in it; it being a rule of judging, which the world cannot be beaten off from, that ten thousand must needs chase a thousand, and a thousand put a hundred to flight. Victory, on much the stronger side, seems still to be foreseen and foretold as certainly as a necessary effect in the bowels of its cause. And yet we shall find that it is not always the bigger weight, but

sometimes the artificial hand holding and managing the balance, which turns the scale. And in like manner, when we have raised armies and manned our fleets, are we not still in the hand of Providence? in that hand, which sometimes sets the crown of victory upon the weak and the few, and disappoints the hopes and breaks the force of the confident and numerous? Could any take up surer and better grounded presages of victory, from a survey of his own stupendous power, than Xerxes might, when he came to fetter the Hellespont, and to swallow up the (comparatively) despicable strength of the Athenians? Or could any thing look more invincible, than the Spanish armada sent against the English navy? But for all this, we find that there is no commanding the sea, without being able to command the winds too; and he who cannot do this, let him not pretend to the other. What a poor thing is preparation, to be trusted to, in opposition to accident. And what a painful defence is multitude on the one side, where omnipotence takes the other? If we read and believe scripture, we shall find Gideon with his three hundred men, armed with lamps and pitchers, routing and destroying the vast and innumerable host of the Midianites: and can any rational man be confident of the greatest forces which human power can raise, if he believes that the same God, who did that, is still in being, and still as able to do the same things as ever? Nay, should we take an exact survey of all passages in history to this purpose, such a pleasure does Providence seem to take in defeating the counsels of confident and presuming men, that perhaps in the greatest battles which were ever fought, we shall find as many victories obtained by a less number over a greater as by a greater over a less: and what then must become of the commonly received rules? But to keep nearer home, and to the day too, if human force and preparation could have determined the event of things, and Providence had proceeded by the same measures which men judge, the business of this day, I am sure, had been desperate, and as impossible in the event as it was once in the opinion and discourse of some, who having done their utmost to prevent it, had the good luck to get too much by it, when it came to pass. For were not the usurpers, just before the king's restoration, as strong as ever? Did they not sit lording it in the head of victorious fleets and armies, with their feet upon the neck of three conquered enslaved kingdoms? and striking such an awe and terror into all about them, that the boldest of their adversaries durst not so much as stir or open their mouths either against their persons or proceedings? And now in this state of things, who would have imagined that any one could have entered into "the strong man's house, and have bound him, but one who had been much stronger?" Or that any thing could have recovered the lost sceptre, but a triumphant sword? Or that the crown being once fought off from the royal owner's head, could

have ever returned to it, but by being fought on again? These and no other methods of restoring the king did either his friends or his enemies think of; but so infinitely unlikely and unfeasible were they, that his enemies feared them as little, as his friends had grounds to hope for them.

When, behold! on a sudden, and in the height of all their pride, policy, and power, Providence gives them a turn, and they see the whole web, which with so much pains, cost, and cunning, they had been so long a weaving, unravelled before their eyes in a moment, and themselves clear off the stage, without having settled any one of those innovations either in church or state, which they had been swearing and lying, whining and praying, plundering and fighting, and cutting throats for (all in the Lord), for near twenty years together; but instead thereof, the ancient government restored, and happily set upon its former bottom (could it have kept itself there); and all this (to phrase it in the words of a late historian*) so easily, and with so little noise, that the wresting of that usurped power out of their hands cost not so much as a broken head or a bloody nose; for the getting of which they had wasted so many millions of treasure, and more than one hundred thousand lives, not to mention the loss of souls; by such unlikely and unforeseeable ways does Providence sometimes bring about its great designs in opposition to the shrewdest conjectures and contrivances of men. And thus much for the other general argument, proving the inability of any human wisdom to comprehend the designs of Providence, taken from those false rates and grounds, by which men generally forejudge of the issue or event of actions.

And now, for the use and improvement of what has been discoursed by us hitherto, we may from the foregoing particulars infer these three things.

1. The extreme folly and vanity of making the future event, or presumed success of any enterprise, the rule of our present actings about the same. A rule, as such, should be a thing both certain in itself, and certainly known to be so. But there is no future contingent, which we promise ourselves, though under the greatest probability of event imaginable, but is still a thing in itself uncertain; and consequently, being capable of failing us in the issue, can be no rational certain rule to guide us for the present. And moreover, as a rule in any human action whatsoever ought to be (as we have here shown) both certain and certainly known to be such, upon the stock of bare prudence and reason; so ought it likewise to be lawful, or morally good upon the accounts of conscience and religion; and therefore nothing contrary to the same ought to be admitted as a rule for men to act by, whether in a private or a public capacity. In a word, conscience, duly steering by principles of morality and religion, is

* Dr. Peter Heylin.

the sole assured director of all human actions or designs. So that when any political sinister consideration would draw men off from a present confessed duty, upon presumption or supposal of some future advantage (to ensue thereby for the service of some great interest, civil or religious), still that advantage is but presumed or supposed, and so not always sure to follow the illegal actions; but the guilt of it always does. And of this we have a remarkable, but sad instance, in the late royal martyr, who had but one thing lay heavy upon his conscience in all his sufferings, and which he always lamented even to his dying day, namely, the death of the great Earl of Strafford. And we may easily imagine the tumults and struggles in his princely breast, when it was assaulted on both sides about that unhappy action. On the one hand, his conscience urged to him the unlawfulness of condemning a person, of whose innocence he always declared himself so fully satisfied. On the other, the stream of the popular fury beat high and fierce upon the throne itself, and seemed to threaten all, if he did not sacrifice the great minister. Now here was a present, certain duty on the one side, persuading him not to violate his conscience; and a supposed future advantage on the other, to wit, his own and his kingdom's security, which induced him to balk his conscience for that person. And we know what course he took; but did it answer his expectations? Did it abate the popular rage at all? or did it secure either his own or his kingdom's peace? Nay, on the contrary, did not the cutting down of that great bank let in a torrent which overwhelmed and carried all before it? Nothing being indeed more usual than for such as venture to displease God, only that they may gratify and please men, in the issue to have God their enemy and man too. And therefore that worthy prelate,* who in the face of all this danger still plied the king with this counsel; "Sir, you know the judgment of your own conscience, I beseech you follow that, and trust God with the rest;" gave him an advice not more becoming the piety of a bishop, than the wisdom of a privy-counsellor; and so deep and lasting an impression did it leave upon his royal and truly tender conscience, that in his last meditations upon this sad subject he observes, That he only, who of all his counsellors advised him to adhere to his conscience against the popular rage, was the person who was the least harassed and pursued by that popular rage when it was at its greatest height of power and tyranny. To which we may add our own further observation of the same pious and wise bishop, that he survived all that tyranny and oppression; and, after he had so fully and worthily served the father, lived to attain to the highest dignity in this church; and, as the completement of all, to set the crown upon the head of his miraculously restored son. And may that Providence that

* Bishop Juxon, then bishop of London, and privy-counsellor.

governs the world, always signalize such peculiar merits with such peculiar rewards. But,

2. We gather also from the foregoing discourse, the absolute necessity of an entire, total, unreserved dependence upon Providence, in the most hopeful and promising condition of our affairs. The natural cause or ground of all dependence is men's consciousness to themselves of their own ignorance or weakness, compared with the sufficiency of others, whereby they expect that relief from others, which they find they cannot have from themselves. This I conceive is the true account and philosophy of this matter. And we have already sufficiently demonstrated man's utter inability, either to understand the reasons, or to control the issues of Providence; so that in all the passages of it, an implicit faith in God's wisdom is man's greatest knowledge, and a dependence upon his power his surest strength. For when all the faculties of man's body and mind have done their utmost, still the success of all is at the mercy of Providence; the ways of which are intricate and various, the grounds upon which it proceeds unintelligible, and the ends it drives at unsearchable. But, in a word, to make our reliance upon Providence both pious and rational, we should in every great enterprise we take in hand, prepare all things with that care, diligence, and activity, as if there was no such thing as Providence for us to depend upon; and again, when we have done all this, we should as wholly and humbly depend upon it, as if we had made no such preparations at all. And this is a rule of practice which will never fail or shame any, who shall venture all that they have or are upon it: for as a man by exerting his utmost force in any action or business, has all that a human strength can do for him therein; so in the next place, by quitting his confidence in the same, and placing it only in God, he is sure also of all that omnipotence can do in his behalf. It is enough that God has put a man's actions into his own power; but the success of them, I am sure, he has not. And therefore all trust in man about things not within the power of man (according to the account of Heaven), is virtually a distrust of God: for let but our trust in him be measured out by our "whole heart, soul, and strength" (the only measure of it which the scripture knows), and we shall find but a poor overplus to bestow upon any thing besides. But,

3. And lastly, as we have from the premised particulars evinced the necessity of a dependence upon Providence, so from the same we may learn the impossibility of a rational dependence upon it with comfort, but in the way of lawful, honest, and religious courses. This is certain, that in all our undertakings God will be, either our friend or our enemy; for Providence never stands neuter; and if so, is it not a sad thing for a man to make a mighty potentate his enemy, and then to put himself under his protection? And yet this is directly the case of every presuming

sinner, and these the terms upon which he stands with almighty God. But can that man with any confidence rest himself upon God's power, whose conscience shall in the meantime proclaim him a traitor to his laws? Or can any people, nation, or government whatsoever, in the doubtful engagements of war, cast itself upon God's mercy, while by its crying sins of profaneness, atheism, and irreligion (or, which is worse, a countenance of all religions), it knows itself so deeply in arrears to his justice? No man persisting in any known wicked course can rationally hope that God should succeed or prosper him in any thing that he goes about; and if success should chance to accompany him in it, it is a thousand to one but it is intended him only as a curse, as the very greatest of curses, and the readiest way, by hardening him in his sin, to ascertain his destruction. He who will venture his life in a duel, should not choose to have his mortal enemy for his second.

On the contrary, the same innocence which makes all quiet within a man, makes all peaceable and serene above him. And that person cannot but have a certain boldness, and a kind of claim to the favours of Providence, whose heart is continually telling him that he does as he should do; and that his conscience, having been all along his director, cannot in the issue prove his accuser: but that all things, whether he looks forwards or backwards, upon what is past or what is to come, shall concur in assuring him, that his great Judge has no other sentence to pass upon him, but to set a crown of glory upon his head, and receive him with an *Euge! bone serve!* "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." And if, being thus inspired and anointed with such supporting expectations, he should yet chance utterly to sink, as to all his concerns and interests here below, yet having thus broke through them all to discharge his duty, the very sense of his having done so shall strengthen his heart and bear up his spirits, though the whole world were in arms against him or in a flame about him; so that he shall be able from his own experience, to seal to the truth of that seeming paradox of the apostle in Rom. viii. 35—37, that persons thus assisted from above, even in "tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness" (the known badges of primitive Christianity), nay, in "their being killed all the day long, and accounted as sheep for the slaughter," shall yet, under these very massacres, "become more than conquerors," through that God who makes those, who fight under his banners, triumph more gloriously in losing their blood for him, than their mightiest and most insulting enemies do or can in their shedding of it. For if a man falls a sacrifice to God, his conscience, or his country, it is not material by what hand he falls: God accepts the martyr, whosoever is the executioner. And so long as there is another world to reward and punish, no man's doom can be certainly pronounced from any thing that befalls him in this.

And now at length, to come to a close of what we have been hitherto discoursing of, we have shown the darkness and intricacy of the ways of Providence; and we have shown also, what incompetent judges, and yet what confident interpreters men are generally of them; from all which what can so naturally result, and so justly be inferred, as the severest reprimands of the blindness and boldness (qualities seldom found asunder) of the saucy descants of the world concerning these matters? For what do they else, but in effect arraign even Providence itself? summon omniscience before the bar of ignorance? and in a word, put a pitiful mortal to sit in judgment upon his Maker? The text, I am sure, positively declares that the works of God are "past finding out;" and if so, is it not the height of absurdity, as well as arrogance, to presume, either from divinity or philosophy, to assign any other reason of the works themselves, but the sole will of the agent? or to pretend to give an account of that which we ourselves own to be unaccountable? Common sense certainly must needs see and explore the grossness of the contradiction, and convince us, that in things so transcendently above our highest and most raised speculations, the only rational and safe rule for us to proceed by will be, to make them rather matter of admiration than of argument, still remembering, that next to a direct violation of God's revealed will, is a bold intrusion into his secret.

Now to the infinitely wise Governor of all things, adorable in his counsels, and stupendous in his works, but essentially just and holy in both, be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON XXIII.

PART I.

ENTHUSIASTS NOT LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

ROMANS VIII. 14.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

THERE is that known averseness in the nature of man, as it now stands, to all acts of virtue (especially such as are of a higher strain), and withal that deplorable impotence and inability to go-through with them whensoever it undertakes them, that not only in the Christian, but also in all other religions, men have found it necessary, in every great action, to engage some other agent and principle, besides the man himself. So that amongst the heathens, who acknowledged a plurality of gods, you will hardly find any noble or heroic achievement done by any of them, but you will find some one or other of their gods made a coadjutor in the case. Thus Homer brings in Diomedes and Ulysses assisted by Mars and Pallas (one notable for acts of valour, and the other for those of counsel and wisdom); and the like is said of many others. All which was but a tacit acknowledgment of that weakness and decay upon man's nature, which has been ever since the fall. For they found, it seems, within themselves an experience of the thing itself, though they could give no account of its cause. And accordingly being ignorant of the source of the malady, it could not be expected but that they should be as much out in the remedies they applied for relief against it. Only thus much is deducible from the whole matter, that they clearly saw themselves concerned to do many worthy things, which they found themselves wholly unable to do, without the help of divine power, or at least some power much superior to their own.

Now what these ignorant heathens blundered about touching this great debilitation of human nature to great and good actions (a thing owned and agreed to by the common experience of the most considering part of mankind), having been first taught the world (though more obscurely) by Moses, has been since more clearly declared to the Christian church (and that above all Pelagian or Socinian opposition whatsoever) by our blessed Saviour himself. For as the books of Moses and of the pro-

phets do assure us, that man was at the first created perfect in all his faculties, and strong in his inclinations to good; and that by the fall of our first parents the entireness of these perfections was lost, both to themselves and to their posterity; so the gospel (like a *tabula post naufragium*) informs us, that the great design of the Redeemer of the world was to repair these sad breaches made upon man's nature (so far as it was necessary to the grand purposes of man's salvation); and that to effect this (amongst other things which he purchased of his Father by his meritorious death) he procured the assistance and abode of his Spirit to be in us, as it is in John xiv. 17, and to "dwell in us," Rom. viii. 9, and to "help our infirmities," as in Rom. viii. 26; and in a word, to lead us into all truth, in John xvi. 13; and so to be, as it were, a universal assisting genius, more or less, to all mankind.

It being clear, therefore, from these and the like places of scripture, that the Spirit of God, in some degree, leads and helps all men, though more eminently and peculiarly some: I shall cast the prosecution of the words under these four heads. As,

I. I shall show how the Spirit is said to be in men.

II. I shall show how men are led by the Spirit.

III. I shall show what is here meant by being the sons of God.

IV. And lastly, I shall gather some conclusions by way of use and information from the whole. And

I. For the first of these. *The Spirit may be said to be in men* two ways.

1. Substantially, as he is God filling all things; and by reason of the infinity and indivisibility of his nature, being wholly every where and in every thing. For his nature being infinite, he can be excluded from no place or thing whatsoever; and being also indivisible, wheresoever he is, he is and must be totally. Forasmuch as his simplicity and indivisibility render him without parts or quantity; the only things that make a being so present to a place by one of its parts, as not to be present to the same place at the same time by another. And according to this sense, the Spirit of God is equally in all men, and indeed in all things, and that essentially and necessarily by the omnipresence and unlimited expansion of his divine nature. And therefore this cannot be the thing we are now inquiring after.

2. The Spirit may be said to be in men, in respect of the effects he produces in them. And thus God is said to be in heaven, and sometimes in one place more than in another; because of some notable operation which he exerts in that place and not in another. In like manner the Spirit of God is said to be in that man, whom, by any immediate impulse or motion, he causes to do a thing; or in whom he creates those habits or dispositions to

action, by which he is enabled to act with more proneness and facility one way than another; and that, whether those habits relate to the matters of morality, as those graces of the Spirit, with which the hearts of believers are sanctified, certainly do; or whether they refer only to matters of a civil import, as the arts of working infused into Bezaleel and Aholiab, or of governing infused into Saul; or of wisdom into Solomon: all of them, no doubt, wrought and produced in those persons by the Spirit of God.

These, I say, are the two allowed ways by which the Spirit or Holy Ghost may be said to be in men; and besides these two I know no other possible; though there are some, who assign a third, namely, the personal indwelling of the Spirit in believers, as they call it, and that wholly different from his being in any other person or things, by either of those ways before mentioned by us. This, I find, has been confidently asserted by some; and particularly by those called *Familists*: but before it be admitted, it is fit it should be examined: and that upon terms of reason and scripture; for by one or both of these it must be proved, or not at all.

1. And first, upon grounds of reason, I affirm, that it is impossible for the person of the Holy Ghost, by any other and different way from the two former, to be more in one man than in another. Forasmuch as his nature or essence being equally diffused through all things, and that nature or essence being likewise included in, and inseparable from, his person; it carries in it a manifest contradiction, for the nature to be any where, and the person including it, and inseparably united to it, not to be there also. Add to this, that if the person of the Holy Ghost should substantially reside or inhabit more in one man than in another, it must needs be because he is freely pleased so to do: but the manner of the divine existence is an attribute of his nature, and so cannot be an effect of his will; since what is purely natural, is also necessary, and so far cannot be free. For it is not free to God, whether he will be present to all and every part of the universe or no; but it is as necessary for him to be so, as omnipresence is a necessary result of infinity. And infinity is the first and grand thing included in the very nature and notion of a Deity. Reason therefore has nothing to say for this personal indwelling of the Holy Ghost in some certain men more than in others; but explodes it as a mere figment and paradox, contrary to all the principles of natural theology.

2. In the next place, therefore, we are to see what the assertors of this personal indwelling of the Spirit in believers are able to produce for it from scripture. And here we shall find nothing but arguments drawn from some scripture expressions, in which we are either said to be the temples of the Holy Ghost, as in 1 Cor. vi. 19, or that the Spirit dwells in us, as in Rom. viii. 11,

with other such like phrases importing inhabitation: which way of inexistence, they say, cannot properly be applied to accidents: such as are the sanctifying graces wrought in us by the Spirit; but only to persons, who alone can be properly said to be in places or temples. And this is all that they argue from scripture.

But metaphors, we know, are but weak mediums to prove any thing. And I refer it to any one of a clear impartial reason to judge, whether, when the Spirit is said to be in us as in a temple, this does not, at the very first sight, appear to be a metaphorical expression; the words importing no more, than that we should be as wholly devoted to God's use and service as a temple is: and that, as it is sacrilegious to alienate a temple to other worldly and profane uses: so is it a piece of no less sacrilege and impiety, after we have consigned over, and, in a manner, dedicated ourselves to the Spirit, to make ourselves servants to sin, Satan, or the world. According to which way of speaking also in Jer. iv. 14, vain thoughts are said to lodge in men's hearts. And in Col. iii. 16, the apostle speaks of "the word of Christ dwelling richly in them." Both which expressions of *lodging* and *dwelling*, strictly taken, indeed import only a local presence, but yet are elegantly applied to thoughts, and such other things as are no more than mere accidents existing in the soul: the meaning of the words being this; that these things reside as constantly and familiarly there, as an inhabitant does in the house where he dwells. And he that would strain any more from such texts, may sooner fetch blood than any sound sense out of them; it being not always the way of Scripture to speak according to the philosophical exactness of things, but in a familiar known latitude of expression. Nor indeed is any thing more usual in the word of God, than to find actions proper to persons ascribed to qualities. As wisdom is said "to build her an house," Prov. ix. 1. And "charity to think no evil, to hope all things, and to suffer all things," in 1 Cor. xiii. 7; with innumerable the like instances. And therefore such places are manifestly short of proving the thing they are here alleged for.

And thus having shown in what sense the Spirit of God may be said to be in men, I come now to

II. The second general thing proposed, which was to show, *what it is for men to be led by the Spirit*. Concerning which we must observe, that the word *leading*, taken by itself alone, without the addition of any particular term, to which we are said to be led ("as Jesus was said to be led by the Spirit into the wilderness," Matt. iv. 1), naturally and properly signifies a guidance of us, not in respect of any one particular action or passage of our lives, but in respect of the whole course of them. And consequently, under this leading of the Spirit, we are not to consider those particular transports and ecstasies, whether by prophecy or vision,

which the Spirit of God has, at several times, raised some persons to. For these were sudden, transient beams, or flashes, upon extraordinary occasions, and not constant light to live and walk by. As therefore the Spirit's leading us, imports a continued steady direction of us in the whole course of our lives or actions, so it imports in it these two things.

1. His prescribing rules and laws to us, to which we are to conform our actions; and so he leads us by those excellent precepts held forth to mankind both in the law and gospel; both of which were dictated by the same eternal Spirit of truth.

2. His enlightening the understanding to discern, and his bending the wills and affections of men to comply with those rules and precepts so held forth to them. The first way he leads us by providing us a path to walk in; and the second, by giving us legs to walk with. For, as I said at first, there is since, and by the fall of man, that innate darkness in his understanding, that it is of itself unable spiritually to perceive the things of God; and that obliquity and rebelliousness in his will, that it cannot heartily choose and embrace them. And therefore though the Spirit should lead us never so much by the former way, that is, by proposing to us rules and precepts to act by; yet it is impossible that we should follow, till those indispositions are in some measure removed; and this is to be done only by the Spirit.

But since some there are so hardy (or profane rather) as to affirm, that to assert that the Spirit imprints upon or creates in any faculty of the soul any disposition or habit, that shall give it a facility in its actings, is enthusiasm; and that, I suppose, because they may account every thing enthusiasm which is not Pelagianism: I answer, that if these persons will but own original sin, and a general depravation of man's nature consequent thereupon (as they are hardly Christians if they do not), I would fain learn how nature shall be able to rid itself from the effects of this depravation or corruption, which has so universally seized all the powers of it, but by some certain principle distinct from and greater than itself. And I would fain know further, why the almighty power of God's Spirit may not work in any faculty of the soul the same readiness, or permanent facility of acting (commonly by another word called a *habit*), which that faculty can produce, or acquire to itself, by a frequent repetition of its own actions; especially since there is nothing which the first cause produces by the mediation of the second, but what it can and sometimes does produce solely by itself (except the vital acts issuing from and denominating their respective powers or principles), in the number of which, habits cannot be reckoned, but are qualities abiding in the soul, even while there is a total cessation from acting, and may be lost again; whereas the power or faculty, wherein they are vested, cannot. But as for those

who deny the immediate infusion of habits into the soul, they should do well to try their strength, and show some principle of reason or scripture contradicted by it; and I dare undertake to allege that from both, which shall bid fair for the proof of it.

And thus much for the two ways by which the Spirit leads men; namely, 1, outwardly, by the written word; and, 2, inwardly by his illumination of the judgment, and bending of the will. Concerning which this must carefully be observed, that though the Spirit frequently, nay ordinarily leads men the former way without this latter; as being indeed rather a direction, or bare pointing out, whither we should go, than a leading us (forasmuch as many are so led or directed who never follow), yet now-a-days the Spirit never leads men the latter way, namely, by his effectual inward operation upon the soul, but he does it in conjunction with the former; that is, first holding forth a rule in the word written or preached, and then working those gracious dispositions, abilities, or fitnesses in the soul, which shall cause it actually to comply with, and square its actions to the same.

And these are all the ways by which the Spirit of God leads the church now. But as I show concerning the Spirit's being in men, that there were some who, besides his being in them by his essential omnipresence, and by those effects which he works within them, held a third distinct way, namely, his personal indwelling in believers; so there are some likewise, who, besides the Spirit's leading men by the written word, and by his enlightening the understanding and bending the will, assert yet another way, namely the Spirit's speaking inwardly to them, and directing them by a secret, uttered (as they pretend) intelligibly enough to the soul of him to whom it is spoken, though unknown to any person besides. And if we will give things their right names, this is truly and properly *enthusiasm*, that pestilent and vile thing, which, wheresoever it has had its full course, has thrown both church and state into confusion. For if men may be admitted to plead that the Spirit leads them by an inward voice speaking to them and known only to themselves, it is impossible that they should acknowledge any rule or governor of their actions but themselves. The folly and mischief of which pretence therefore I shall endeavour to make appear (which is the principal design of this discourse) from several considerations. But before I come to mention particulars, I shall give you one remarkable instance, and home to the subject now before us. And it is this; that the main instrument and engine which that *grand* and vilest of impostors, Mahomet, first set up with, in the venting and offering his blasphemous impostures to the world, was this secret, inward voice of the Spirit conversing with him, and revealing to him the several heads of his detestable religion: which as nobody did or could pretend to be conscious to but himself, so I will maintain, that upon this principle of the inward voice of the

Spirit, there is nobody since Mahomet (no, not the Whigs' demi-god Oliver himself) but might (had he met with such an amazing torrent of success as Mahomet found) have carried on any enthusiastic design as effectually as ever that monster did. But now to pass to those particular considerations, before promised by us, for the beating down and exploding the secret voice of the Spirit, which such hypocrites so confidently pretend to be led by, you may observe as follows:

1. The word of God in scripture is proposed and declared by the Spirit itself speaking in the same as a rule both necessary and sufficient for men to be led and acted by in all their spiritual concerns; and consequently no such inward word or voice from the same Spirit to the soul of any particular person whatsoever can be proved or allowed to be such a rule. For if this inward word pretends to reveal the very same things which are actually revealed in the said scripture already, in that case such revelation being but the bare repetition of truths, both already revealed and sufficiently confirmed, it cannot pass for a rule really necessary; nor, on the other side, if it speaks things different from (and much more, contrary to) what the written word speaks (supposing the said written word to be a full and sufficient rule both for belief and practice, as all who receive it must hold it to be), can this inward voice and word then, in the proper notion of a rule, be so much as allowable. For does not the scripture stand vouched by apostolical and divine authority, as "able to make the man of God perfect? and to furnish him to every good work?" And will not all this satisfy? or would these men have any more? But alas! as good works (especially in the matter of justification) used to be accounted dangerous things; so whatsoever these men's new faith in the inward word or voice of the Spirit may do for them this way, I dare say, that their good works are never likely to justify or sanctify either them or their religion; as will appear from

2. The second and next consideration; which is the great and just suspiciousness of the forementioned pretence, that the inward word or voice of the Spirit is the rule which it leads men by, in that it is seldom or never alleged, but for the patronage of such actions as cannot be warranted or defended upon any other account whatsoever. For you shall never hear such men pleading that the Spirit tells them they must obey their governors, reverence the church and the ministers of it, be charitable to the poor, behave themselves justly to all, injure nobody, defraud nobody, and the like; which duties both reason and the written word of God so much press and inculcate. But when the yoke of government begins to sit uneasy upon their unruly necks, or when they have run themselves out of their estates, and so come to cast a longing eye upon the revenues of the church, or of their rich neighbours about them; why then the word, that commands

obedience, and forbids all violence and injustice, presently becomes not only a dead, but a killing letter, and a beggarly rudiment, and in comes the Spirit with a mighty controlling force to relieve and set them at liberty, teaching them to bind "kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron;" assuring them withal, that the godly only have any right to possess the earth. And if so, then let them alone to persuade themselves (and others too if they can) that they only are the godly; and that by rules and arguments which the scripture is wholly a stranger to. For the scripture, all know, is looked upon by these seraphic pretenders as a very mean insignificant thing: and never made nor intended to direct such sons of perfection, but to be directed and overruled by them. And now let any one judge, whether that inward voice or word can proceed from the Spirit, which is still urged in justification of those actions and opinions, which neither law nor gospel (though both of them infallibly dictated by that very Spirit) can speak one word for.

3. A third argument against the same pretence is, that such a pretence is contrary to the experience of the generality of Christians, and those also the most pious, humble, and best exercised in the ways of God of any others. For did the apostles themselves pretend to any such thing? Or did the primitive professors of Christianity, and the martyrs of the church, own any thing but the written word of God, as that which they were to believe and practise by? Or did they acknowledge that the Spirit whispered any thing to their souls by any immediate voice distinct from the scriptures? Which yet they would certainly have found, had this been the way by which the Spirit of God led believers. For there is no question, but that as all of them were still led by the same Spirit, and that to the same great end, so they were led also by the same way: there being but one way to heaven and happiness, both then and now established by God; the same things being to be believed, and the same things to be practised, and those also generally the same way to be learned, in order to men's salvation.

4. A fourth argument against this pretence of an inward word or voice being the rule which the Spirit leads men by, is, that such a pretence directly opens a door to all profaneness and licentiousness of living. For the Spirit of God being God, who gave mankind the laws which they are to live by; and it being clear, that the same power that gave or enacted the law, can dispense with its obligation in any particular instance of duty; let a man but persuade himself, that the Spirit dwells personally in him, and speaks upon all occasions to him; how easily and readily may he plead, that the Spirit tells him he may kill his enemy, plunder his neighbour, cast off all obedience to his governors! And if the written law of God commanding the contrary be alleged to such a one, he may presently reply, that the same God

that made that law, does, by an inward voice speaking to him, exempt him from the obliging power of it in such and such actions. Upon which account, let a man be never so much a villain, provided he be so in a godly sort, and will patronize all his lewd practices by the authority of the Spirit, it is impossible that a man should sin; forasmuch as the Spirit takes off the obligation of the law to his hand, so that though it may bind the rest of mankind, yet he is dispensed with, and stands particularly excepted from that common rule.

Thus the late rebel army, having conquered and imprisoned their conscience as well as their prince, completed all by bringing the Spirit to their lure, and reducing enthusiasm to an act; still governing all their transactions with their abused sovereign by this invincible principle, which enabled them with so much ease to charge through the obligation of all laws, oaths, and promises whatsoever. So that in their several treatings with the king, being asked by him, whether they would stand to such and such agreements and promises, they still answered him, that they would do as the Spirit should direct them. Whereupon that blessed prince would frequently condole his hard fate, that he had to deal with persons to whom the Spirit dictated one thing one day, and commanded the clean contrary the next. In the strength of this almighty principle also, they would openly and professedly call their seizing upon the goods, lands, and estates of the royalists, *a robbing of the Egyptians*; affirming that the Spirit had clearly revealed to them, that God had alienated the right and property of these estates from the other, and transferred it to them; so that they held what they had taken from their neighbours, by immediate donation from God himself; which, could it have been proved, was undoubtedly the surest and the best title in the world. Upon the same principle also was it, that some of their factious preachers, having first fired their fellow-citizens into a rage against their king, the next day, upon their going to that holy war, come personally amongst them, and, in the name of God, pronounced them absolved, and free from all former oaths and promises; such as those of supremacy, allegiance, and the like, whereby they might otherwise think themselves obliged not to fight against their sovereign, whom they had so solemnly sworn obedience to: and lastly, upon the stock of the same principle was it, that one of their prime leading doctors,* being justly charged with schism, cleared himself from that imputation by affirming, that he knew himself to have the Spirit of God, and therefore that he neither was nor could be a schismatic. Which worthy argument had he used to the apostle St. Paul, I doubt not but he would have retorted it upon him, and told him that his causeless separation from, and uncharitable invectives against the church, clearly proved him to be

* Dr. O.

a schismatic; and that therefore in that case he neither had nor could have the Spirit of God. But if the other end of the argument be taken, what person is there so vile and wicked, who may not justify himself and his actions by it? For it is but for him confidently to assert and face men down, that he has the Spirit, and then he has sufficiently proved his actings good and pious, and agreeable to the mind of God, though directly contrary to his law; while the Spirit's impulse is urged against the Spirit's commands, and his secret word bandied against his written; much like the late parliament's pressing men in the king's name to fight against the king's person. And thus by this spiritual engine are all the laws of God, in the very name and authority of God himself, overturned and made of none effect: and if so, how will any laws or statutes, made by men, be able to stand before it? No; it presently breaks through all such cobwebs, and snaps asunder all these pitiful useless human ordinances, as unworthy to lay hold of such sons of perfection, as carry their law and their lawgiver about them. For whatsoever the Spirit commands, that in all reason they must do; especially since they are upon such fair terms, that the Spirit never commands them but what they please.

5. The fifth and last argument against this pretence of an inward voice of the Spirit is, that no man can assure either himself or others, that the Spirit of God speaks inwardly to him. And can any man look upon that as a rule to be led by, which is itself wholly unknown to him? For let any pretender to the Spirit prove, that it is really the Spirit of God which dictates this or that to him; and that what he takes for the voice of the Spirit is not indeed the dictates of his own mind or fancy, being strongly fixed upon some certain object. I have shown elsewhere, that such as plead conscience could not evidence the reality and truth of that plea to others, however they might know it themselves. But here, when men plead the Spirit, they can neither make out the truth of what they plead to others, nor yet to themselves. For if they would prove, that the things suggested to their minds are inspired and suggested by the immediate voice of the Spirit, they must prove it either from the quality of the things themselves, or from some argument extrinsic to those things. From the former they cannot; for neither the antecedent goodness or badness of the things that come into their minds, can prove them to have proceeded or not proceeded from the Spirit; since this goodness is made a consequent of the Spirit's suggestion; so that whatsoever the Spirit inspires or suggests, is upon that very account rendered good: and the truth is, for this cause alone is this inspiration pretended, viz. to stamp those things and actions good, which otherwise would not, could not be so; so that we must not prove the Spirit's suggestion from the goodness of the thing suggested; but on the contrary

infer, that the thing so suggested must needs be good, because it is suggested by the Spirit. Which is a compendious way for a man to authorize and sanctify whatsoever he does, thinks, or desires, by alleging that the Spirit prompted it to him. And therefore that fanatic spoke home and fully to the point, who said, "that he had indeed read the scripture, and frequented ordinances for a long time, but could never gain any true comfort or quiet of mind till he had brought himself to this persuasion, that whatsoever he had a mind to do, was the will of God that he should do."

It being most clear therefore, that men cannot prove the Spirit's speaking to them from the quality of the things spoken, they must fetch the proof of it from something else, and that must be either from reason, or scripture, or miracles. The first of these is not so much as pretended to; for the persons that pretend to the Spirit generally lay the foundation of this pretence in the ruins of reason, which they utterly decry. And for scripture, this in effect is as much balked as the other; since the inward voice of the Spirit is still alleged in the behalf of those actions that find no patronage from scripture; but so much of it as they rely upon shall be considered, when I come to examine those scripture examples, by which these impostors would seem to defend themselves. The last way therefore, by which they must prove this immediate extraordinary guidance of the Spirit inwardly speaking to them, must be by miracles or prophecies. And surely there is all the reason in the world, that those who pretend a guidance of the Spirit singular and extraordinary above the rest of mankind, should be able to do something, which the rest of mankind cannot do: for so our Saviour argued of himself, John x. 25, "The works that I do, bear witness of me."

But as for our pretenders to the Spirit, what is there extraordinary or miraculous in them, but impudence, falseness, and hypocrisy? Consider the late army, the weapons of all whose warfare were in this (abused indeed) sense spiritual with a witness; and what miracles did they do, besides turning our rivers into blood, robbing and cutting throats, and tumbling down principalities and powers, to settle Christ in his kingdom, and to make themselves his deputies, to rule the nations of the earth till he came? In which office, when they were once settled, I suppose they would give him leave to stay away from his charge as long as he pleased, and perhaps the longer the better. And then for their being able to prove any of their pretences by prophecy, we may take an estimate of the prophetic spirit which inspired them, by those famous prophecies of Oliver's recovery and long life two days before his death. As also by the so much talked of prophecies of 1666, which for a long time made the first article of the fanatics' creed, till that year came at length, and fired them out of it.

And here having touched upon miracles and prophecies, I thought good to remark this by the way, that their proving efficacy is not so universal as to evince the truth or lawfulness of every thing that they might be brought to prove; but only of such things as are essentially good, or of such as have their moral goodness or evil depending upon the free sanction of God's will, either commanding or forbidding them. As, for instance, the act of killing a man may be good or evil, according as it is done with or without sufficient authority; and the taking away a thing in another man's possession may be lawful or unlawful, according as the property is either altered or not altered; both of which, we know, are in the number of those things which God may freely dispose of. But if any thing or action have a natural turpitude or indecency in it, founded upon the essential relation of one thing to another, this being repugnant to the divine holiness to be the author of, no miracles nor prophecies, though never so exactly fulfilled, can prove such things to be the will or mind of God, that they should be done; as is clear from Deut. xiii. 1, 2, where, if any one shows "a sign or wonder, whereby he would persuade men to worship other gods, and that sign or wonder come to pass;" God positively warns his people, that no credit should be given to such signs or miracles; and the reason is evident, because it is impossible for God to "give his honour to another," or command the worship due to his divine nature to be conferred on idols, or on any thing but himself. But such signs or miracles come to pass only for the trial of men's faith, to see whether they will by any means be drawn off from their duty or no. And therefore if any one should pretend an inward voice of the Spirit suggesting such things to him, and to prove that inward voice should show a sign or miracle, neither the pretence of one nor the authority of the other ought to be admitted; as being brought to confirm a thing directly contrary both to God's nature and his word.

And thus having shown that no man pretending to this guidance of the Spirit, by an inward voice speaking to him, can prove that this is indeed the Spirit of God, by any argument, either from the quality of the things suggested by it, or from reason, or scripture, no, nor yet from miracles, or prophecies, I suppose I have sufficiently demonstrated, that he has no way to prove it by at all.

And yet it must not be denied, that there is another way pretended to, by which a man may certainly know himself to have the Spirit, though he cannot prove it; and that is by the Spirit itself. For as light, they say, is seen and discovered by itself, and its own inherent brightness, without the help of any thing else to discover it to the eye; and as first principles shine and show themselves to the understanding by their own innate evidence, without the help of any medium to prove them

by; so is it with the Spirit, that shows and discovers itself to those that have it, by itself, and its own light, without any other argument to declare it.

In answer to this, I affirm first, that this assertion of the self-evidence of the Spirit showing itself to the soul of him who has it, or is led by it, must needs be false, as being directly contradicted by the scripture, which bids men examine themselves, and that particularly about this matter, "whether Christ," i. e. the Spirit of Christ, "be in them or no," 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

The same scripture bids them also "try the spirits," 1 John iv. 1, which, no doubt, respects the Spirit in a man's self, as well as in others. But surely nothing that is self-evident can be the proper subject of examination or trial; all examination being to make something clearer and better known, by being examined, than it was before, which in things self-evident, clear, and unquestionable, can have no place. For no man is ever bid to examine himself, whether he be alive or no; and whether he breathes and walks, while he is breathing and walking; for these things are self-evident to him; and if the Spirit were so too to him who has it, it would be altogether as senseless and absurd to bid such a one to examine himself, whether the Spirit were in him or no. But such absurdities are not the language of scripture. And thus much to show the falseness of the assertion itself. Now in the next place, for the argument brought to prove it, it is apparently fallacious, as depending upon the supposed parity of two instances which indeed are not parallel. For though light is discerned by itself, because by itself it incurs into the eye, and first principles do by themselves show and offer themselves to the understanding; yet I deny that the Spirit of God shows itself to the soul immediately by itself and its own substance, but by its operations and effects; which are distinct from the Spirit itself, and consequently require some rule to try from what principle they proceed.

And that this is so, is manifest from this one consideration, that if the Spirit shows itself and its glorious substance immediately to the soul, this would be properly the beatific vision, nor would there be any difference in our knowing God here and hereafter; for then only we shall know him by sight, and intuition of his glorious substance; which the scripture calls, a "seeing him face to face," and "knowing him as we are known." From whence it being clear, that the Spirit of God not showing itself to the soul immediately by itself and its own substance, as light does to the eye, but by the mediation of its operations and effects upon the soul, it follows, that it is not discernible by itself, as light is, but by its operations: which operations are triable and distinguishable by certain rules. And so much in answer to the prime and grand plea of enthusiasm.

But here, if being driven off from the Spirit's immediate evi-

dencing of itself to the soul, they shall take up in the operations and effects of the Spirit, and affirm that these carry such light and evidence in them, as must certainly discover them to the soul to have been from the Spirit: I answer, that those who allege this, mean either that the Spirit of God can exert such an operation upon the soul, as shall carry in it this self-evidencing quality, or that it actually does so. The former, though granted, would be nothing to the present purpose. And for the latter, I utterly deny it, and leave it to its assertors to prove; giving withal this reason for my denial of it, that nothing is more usual than for believers to be ignorant of the graces that have been really wrought upon their hearts by the Holy Ghost, and thereupon to doubt whether they are in a state of favour with God or no. For who more apt oftentimes to complain of and bemoan the hardness and pride of their hearts, than such as are truly tender, humble, and poor in spirit? Which sufficiently demonstrates, that the operations of the Spirit do not always evidence themselves to the soul, though they have passed upon it in the production of real and great effects.

Having thus proved, that no man can be sure that the Spirit of God leads him by any word or voice inwardly speaking to him; I suppose I need not prove, that he is much less able to assure others of it besides himself. And yet this must be added and insisted upon, that supposing a man to make this the rule of his actions, he stands bound not only to satisfy himself, but others also, concerning it; forasmuch as he is bound to give no just occasion of offence to his Christian brethren: and consequently ought to render an account of the reason of his actings to those who, upon great and sufficient ground, are scandalized at them, which the generality of Christians must needs be, when they see a professor of the same religion with themselves act contrary to that written rule, which they all judge themselves obliged to act and live by. But for them to satisfy others about this inward voice of the Spirit, which they can noways evidence to themselves, is certainly impossible: and therefore this can by no means be admitted as a rule for any man to be led by; since nothing can be properly a rule, but that concerning which a man may rationally satisfy both himself and others: which if he cannot, nothing that he does, by the direction of that rule, can be done either in faith or without scandal; and so long there unavoidably lies upon him, in all his life and actions, a necessity of sinning; the most deplorable condition certainly that can befall a man, as being the very high road to hell, and the direct way to damnation.

And thus I have given the reasons, why this inward voice of the Spirit cannot be the rule which men are to be guided by. As namely, 1. Because it infers that the written word cannot be such a rule. 2. Because of its suspiciousness; for that it is never alleged, but in behalf of such actions as can plead no allowance upon any other account whatsoever. 3. Because it is contrary to the common experience of Christians, and those the most pious, knowing, and

best acquainted with the ways of God. 4. Because it opens a door to all licentiousness; and, what is more, sanctifies it with the name of piety and religion. And 5, and lastly, because it is such a rule, as a man can neither evidence to himself nor to others, and yet is bound to do both. Which reasons, I conceive, are abundantly sufficient to explode and extinguish this impudent and irrational pretence with all sober and intelligent persons whatsoever.

The remaining particulars shall (God assisting) be thoroughly considered and despatched in the following discourse.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON XXIV.

PART II.

THE SCRIPTURE A SUFFICIENT GUIDE TO SALVATION.

ROMANS VIII. 14.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

HAVING, I presume, in my first discourse upon this important subject, sufficiently exploded the bold fancies and extravagant pretences of those sons of novelty and inspiration, by the foregoing reasons there produced against them, I shall now proceed to an examination of what they yet plead more for themselves, and this their daring, but absurd hypothesis. For these pretenders to an immediate impulse, and inward leading voice of the Spirit, will not rest satisfied so, but, for their further defence, plead the example of several eminent saints and worthies of the church, doing several things (as they would persuade us) contrary to the express written word, and yet with sufficient evidence of the divine approbation: the reason of which seems not possible to be stated upon any thing but this, that the Spirit of God did by an inward voice raise them to, and consequently warrant them in those actions, notwithstanding any prohibition lying against them in the written letter of the word. Such, for instance, were Abraham's attempting to sacrifice his son Isaac. Jacob's deceiving his father, and defrauding and supplanting his brother Esau with a lie. Also the Egyptian midwives saving the Hebrew children; and Rahab the harlot's saving the spies of Canaan by lies and false affirmations. Likewise Moses, killing the Egyptian, while he was but a private person in Pharaoh's court; and Phineas's killing of Zimri and Cozbi after the same manner. Of the like nature was the Israelites' robbing or spoiling the Egyptians; Samson's killing of himself, that he might be revenged on the Philistines; Ehud's killing of Eglon king of Moab, to whom, with the rest of the children of Israel, he was at this time subject; Jael's killing Sisera, though he was in league with her husband, and upon that account was induced to take shelter in her house. Add to these, Elijah's killing the prophets of Baal, though being no magistrate he had no right, against the magistrate's will, to execute justice upon his fellow-subjects, though never so

worthy of death by law. With these, I say, and such other scripture examples, these pretenders to the inward voice of the Spirit, in opposition to his written word, use to defend themselves. In order to the examination of which instances, before I survey them severally and apart, I shall premise these four general observations.

1. That the actions of persons recorded in scripture are not proposed to us as rules of direction to live or act by: laws and precepts are the only things intended for that purpose, and consequently are of a universal extent and obligation, and respect the actions of all mankind. But examples and instances, as they are personal, so they are also particular, and exhibit to us matter of fact, what has been done, but not matter of duty, what ought or ought not to be done. For certain it is, that no contrary practices, though never so much allowed, even by divine approbation, do or can cancel any law made by God: but at the most declare, that some persons have been dispensed with in some things enjoined by law. And therefore as God's will to oblige men in general, where he makes no exception, and his will not to oblige some particulars, whom he is pleased to except, do noways clash or contradict, but very fairly accord with one another; so those examples which declare where he has actually thus used his prerogative, do noways abrogate or repeal the standing obligation of those laws, which otherwise certainly bind mankind, where such exceptions have not interposed. And God might have many reasons why he thought fit to deliver down to us, in sacred history, an account of such extraordinary actions and passages of men's lives, without ever intending them as rules or patterns for us to measure our actions by. As, for instance, partly to manifest the absoluteness of his prerogative and dominion even over his own laws; partly to magnify the admirable contrivances of his providence, bringing about strange and great events by such unusual actions: partly also to declare and show the necessity of his grace, and withal the deplorable weakness even of the best of men, when he is pleased at any time to leave them to themselves: besides other reasons best known to his infinite wisdom, and therefore such as may well become ours not to inquire into. And so much for the first observation.

2. The second is this; that God treated with men in those first days of the church, after a very different way from what he does in these latter, and since the times of the gospel; in which he has given mankind the last and perfect revelation of his will, and withal completed and confirmed the whole canon of scripture, as the great and full repository of that revelation. It may appear to any ordinary observation, that it has been God's method all along to discover himself to the world by degrees, and to train up his church from a less to a more perfect religion, still vouchsafing a greater measure of light to the latter ages of the church than

to the former, till at length he revealed himself, in the most absolute and perfect manner of all, by the gospel of his Son.

Now, as in those first ages of the church, the notions of religion were generally much weaker and more obscure than now-a-days, so God found it necessary sometimes, by extraordinary means and ways, to discover his mind to men; the common discoveries of it not sufficing for all the particular exigencies and occasions of the church; but as the most wise God neither in nature nor religion ever does any thing in vain, so it is observable, that as more of his will came to be declared and written by the prophets, so there were still fewer instances of these extraordinary declarations of it by the peculiar suggestions and inspirations of the Spirit. For in the days of Samuel we read that the vision of the Lord was rare and seldom, 1 Sam. iii. 1. And in the days of Isaiah, and the other immediate following prophets, much rarer; and from Malachi to John Baptist, the extraordinary and prophetic spirit seems wholly to have ceased. But when the Messias was come, whose business it was to reveal the whole mind of God, and to confirm it by the highest proof of miracles that could be given, and so to establish a perpetual and universal rule, which should last to the world's end, and answer all the possible occasions of his church; what reason can there be now assigned, why any inward extraordinary inspiration of the Spirit should be thought necessary to guide men in those actions, which the Spirit has provided a standing, full, and sufficient rule for already?

The ground of God's dealing with and speaking to some persons after such a singular and peculiar manner in those first times, was the imperfect economy of the church then; and the imperfection of its economy was founded upon this, that it was all that time in a state of expectation; by every thing almost, whether ordinary or extraordinary, pointing at the Messias yet to come: who being now actually come and exhibited, the reason of those things must by consequence cease; nor can the extraordinary motions of the Spirit, whether by prophecies, miracles, or new revelations, be of any necessity to the church at all. Granting therefore, that God did indeed, in those first times of the church, direct and move many men by immediate impulses, and inward voices of the Spirit; yet the same is by no means pleadable from thence by any living under the Christian economy, forasmuch as the cause, for which God vouchsafed it then, is wholly at an end now. Whereupon the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, in Heb. i. 1, 2, tells us, that "God, who in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son." In which words he clearly shows, that this one way of God's speaking by his Son, was instead of all those ways of his speaking to men formerly; and consequently, that after he comes once to speak to us this way, those other ways of his mani-

festing himself are no more to be expected : Christ, the great prophet, who was to make known all the will of his Father, being thus come.

But still this is to be supposed, that under the coming of Christ we are to comprehend the proof and declaration of that his coming, by the signs and miracles wrought for that purpose, both by himself and his apostles; by which the Spirit of God having done enough to convince the world that the Messias was indeed come, and that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messias, and his doctrine the full and last revelation of the mind of God to mankind; this, I say, being thus effected, there is, upon no terms, the same reason alleageable for the continuance of those extraordinary motions and impulses of the Spirit in the church now, which the scripture tells us were vouchsafed to many eminent worthies in the church heretofore: and so much for the second observation.

3. The third and principal is this; that there has been no man, whom the Spirit of God immediately, and after an extraordinary manner, used to move or inspire, but has been attended with those signs and characters, by which he has been visibly known and taken notice of by all about him to have been such an extraordinary person. That this was so *de facto*, will appear by running over the several persons to whom God used thus to manifest himself, either in the Old or New Testaments; where you will find those remarkable manifestations of God's presence with them, whether by miracles or other extraordinary and supernatural passages relating to their persons, so that all people knew them to be prophets, and men sent and inspired by God. Nor indeed in reason could it be otherwise, considering that the design of God, in raising up such men, was to signify his mind by them to the world, whose duty thereupon it was to hearken unto them, and to obey them speaking in the name of God. But if those persons did not carry upon them such marks and signs, whereby people should be enabled to know and discern them to be really what they professed themselves, it was impossible but men must unavoidably sometimes listen to impostors and false prophets, and sometimes reject the true; there being no certain mark whereby to distinguish and know them one from another. For if their own word and affirmation were sufficient to vouch their mission, it is evident that false prophets could and did affirm themselves to be inspired, and sent by God, as much as those who were so indeed. And thus much for the third observation.

4. The fourth and last is this; that when any action, unwarranted by the rule of God's written word, has been done by a person not known by any remarkable sign to have been led and acted by an extraordinary spirit, nothing can warrant such an action to have been allowed by God, but only God's own subse-

quent approbation of it, declared either immediately by himself, or by some person known to be inspired by him. And therefore if the enthusiasts of our times will warrant any of their lawless, irregular actions, to have been done by authority of divine impulse, if they cannot by miracles and signs prove themselves to be persons inspired, as were Moses, Samson, Elias, and such others; yet let them show, at least, that God has passed some particular approbation upon what they have done, as he did upon the action of the Egyptian midwives, of Rahab the harlot, and Jael's killing Sisera, and the like. But then also this approbation must be made in express words, and not gathered only from the success of the action; which, if it be a sufficient declaration of God's being pleased with any action, then none would have so fair and full a plea for the lawfulness of what they do, as the Turk, or any victorious infidel, prospering in any great villany that he undertakes. Yet this was the constant plea and current divinity of the saints of the late times (revived in these); this, I say, was still the beaten theme of those Balaams in their thanksgiving sermons, all along proving God's approbation of their cause by the success of it; that is, taking their text out of the bible, and their proofs out of the alcoran.

Now these four rules or observations being premised, namely,

1. That examples are not recorded in scripture as rules of action.
2. That the Spirit of God treated with the church heretofore in a very different way from what he does since the time of Christ.
3. That persons extraordinarily inspired, were known to be such by visible signs and characters of God's presence with them.
4. That where the signs appeared not, no action done besides the rule of God's written word, could or can pretend to have been done with divine allowance, without a subsequent divine approbation expressly passed upon it; these rules, I say, being thus laid down, I shall now by the light of them examine the several instances above alleged; many of which will be found lawful and allowable by the standing rules of God's law, howsoever they have been produced in behalf of extraordinary inspiration.

1. And first for the example of Abraham going about to sacrifice his son. It is certain, that to kill any one (much more a son) without sufficient authority, is a sin; and what it is a sin to do, must be a sin also to attempt. To clear this act of Abraham therefore from sin, we must affirm him to have done it with sufficient authority; which could be derived only from God, who alone has a plenary right to dispose of the lives of innocent men. But God does not by any written law give men power to take away the lives of such persons. And therefore all authority and warrants derived from him in this matter, must have been fetched from an immediate and extraordinary revelation of his

divine will commanding, and thereby authorizing Abraham thus to deal with his son; so that an extraordinary voice, or dictate of the Spirit, must here be confessed. But then, that this is not here pleaded in the behalf of Abraham *gratis*, and upon such grounds as any man may plead the like, is evident from those many other extraordinary passages of his life. As God's appearing to him in Ur of the Chaldees, and bidding him leave his country. Three angels lodging with him, and God's discoursing with him as familiarly as a man does with his friend, about the destruction of Sodom; together with his strange procreation of a son in his old age. All which were sufficient demonstrations, that he was a person whom God dealt with after an immediate and extraordinary manner; and different from the common way of his speaking to and dealing with the rest of mankind.

2. For Jacob's supplanting his brother Esau, though God had designed him to the birth-right, yet the manner of his procuring it was throughout the whole action sinful and fraudulent; nor have we any cause to conclude it to have been pleasing to God, or commanded by him; and much less intended for a rule or example to warrant any to do the like; there being not one word in scripture that intimates the divine approbation of it.

3. For the Egyptian midwives' saving the Hebrew children, and Rahab's saving the spies of Canaan by lies and false affirmations; the humanity, charity, and mercifulness of the action, was the only thing commended and approved by God; but the adherent circumstance of it, that it was done by a lie, was sinful and noways approved by him, nor consequently to be imitated by us.

4. For Moses' killing the Egyptian, while he was a private person in Pharaoh's court; we are to deny the supposition that he was a private person at that time, but that he was even then commissioned by God governor of Israel, and consequently in the right of a governor might revenge the wrong done to his subjects. For though we find not a particular account, how and when God invested Moses in the government of his people, while he lived with Pharaoh; yet that the right of governing them was by God conferred upon him, is evident from Acts vii. 25, where the Spirit of God by the mouth of St. Stephen speaks that of Moses, that must needs imply so much. For it is said, that when Moses slew the Egyptian, he supposed, that his brethren would have understood that God had raised him up to be their deliverer, and consequently their governor. And if he supposed that this would have been understood by others, it could not be, but that he, at that time, must needs have known and understood it himself.

5. For Phineas's killing of Zimri and Cozbi, he did it by the express command of Moses the supreme magistrate, who in Numb. xxv. 5, commanded the judges of the people, of which Phineas, the second person in the priestly dignity, could not but

be one, to fall upon such as had "joined themselves to Moab, and to slay every one his man." So that there is no need here to recur to any extraordinary motion of the Spirit, to authorize this action of Phineas; nor yet to that *jus zelotarum*, asserted by some amongst the Jews.

6. For the Israelites' spoiling the Egyptians, Exod. xii. 36, though it is manifest, that what they did was by the express command of God signified to them by Moses, whose great and mighty miracles sufficiently declared him to be one to whom God used to speak after a peculiar and extraordinary manner; yet to state the lawfulness of the action upon other grounds also, we must know that the word *לָקַח* here translated "borrowing," may signify either to *borrow*, or barely to *ask* or *demand* a thing of another. If we take it in the first sense, we have no cause to conclude, but that, when the Israelites borrowed such and such things of the Egyptians, they were borrowers *bonâ fide*, and knew not at that time of borrowing, but that, after they had sacrificed to God, they might come back again and make restitution; but God afterwards prohibiting their return, and thereupon rendering it unlawful, and withal the Egyptians pursuing them as enemies, it became impossible for them to restore what they had borrowed; and being so, though the Egyptians lost what they had lent them, yet it was without any fraudulence or injustice on their part, who were the borrowers. But then, if we take the word in the other sense, as it signifies only the bare asking or demanding of a thing (as the best expositors upon the place confess the word to be rendered *borrowing* rather than *asking*, more from the circumstances of the case in hand, than from the proper force and signification of the word): I say, if we take it thus, no more can be gathered from the text, but that the Israelites, upon their departure, asked such and such things of the Egyptians, and they freely gave them what they asked; which was very agreeable to that condition of fear and terror they were in, through the repeated infliction of so many plagues upon their land; which might well at that time make them ready to part with any thing to the Israelites, as being desirous to be rid of them upon any terms. So that which way soever we take the word, there was nothing sinful or unjust in the action, nor applicable to their purpose, who from this and such like scriptures think they may plunder their neighbours *jure divino*, and rob and pillage by commission from God himself. Nor yet does that word "spoiling" of the Egyptians import any injustice in the proceeding; forasmuch as it does not of necessity denote any unlawful intention in the taker or borrower, but only the event of the action in respect of the lender; who, if he loses his estate, is equally spoiled and undone, whether the means by which he is bereaved of it were just or unjust. And so much for this instance. In the

Seventh place. As for that of Samson's killing himself, we must know that self-murder is to be measured by the prime and direct intention of the person who does it; and not by any event accidentally and secondarily attending an action designed to much another end. Samson, being chief magistrate of the children of Israel, might destroy the Philistines who were their enemies; and this was the thing primely, nay solely intended by him, and not the taking away his own life, which, no doubt, he wished that in that action he could have preserved from the common ruin, though he knew that the cause was such, that while he took away his enemies' lives, he should by consequence lose his own. And this, some are of opinion, was altogether as lawful, as for a captain to descend into battle to fight for his country, though he knew certainly that he should die in the encounter. I cannot affirm the cases to be parallel; yet certainly Samson's action could not strictly and properly be called self-murder, there being in it no design against his own life, though there was a neglect of it, which in a just cause is very allowable. But if we admit here of an extraordinary motion of the Spirit, inciting Samson to do what he did, the eminent and miraculous assistance vouchsafed him by the Spirit in that very action, is abundantly sufficient to credit and make good that allegation. In the

Eighth place. For Ehud's killing of Eglon, king of the Moabites; besides that he seems to carry his authority in those words, in which he is said to have been "raised up by God to deliver Israel," Judges iii. 15, we must know that Ehud is not here to be looked upon as Eglon's rightful subject, but as his enemy. For the Israelites were then in captivity and bondage to the king of Moab, who oppressed them. But a state of captivity, where no league or compact supervenes, is a state of hostility; and consequently, when the captives can get power enough into their hands, they have as much right to attack the lives of their enemies, as if they met them in battle upon an open and professed war.

9. For Jael's killing of Sisera, the captain of Jabin's host, Judges iv. 21, when (as some judge from the text) there was a league between Jabin and her husband Eber the Kenite, which league must equally bind her; both husband and wife being politically but one person: I answer, that both she and her husband are to be supposed to have been under a precedent league with the Israelites, under whose protection they lived, and whose religion they professed; and consequently no subsequent league with their enemies could discharge them from the obligation of the former. And by that they were obliged to prosecute the enemies of Israel, as much as were the Israelites themselves. But I add, secondly, that the text speaks not of any league between Jabin and Eber, but says only, that "there was peace between them;" which, I conceive, implies no more of

necessity, than a mutual forbearance of acts of hostility, and a neighbourly intercourse thereupon; which might be without the obligation of any league or contract; and very well cease, when a league inconsistent with that peace should engage them in a state of war. In the

Tenth and last place. It must be confessed (and there is no colour of pretence against it) that Elijah acted by the impulse of an extraordinary spirit; which was sufficiently manifest to all Israel, both from the miracles done by him in his life, and his miraculous translation, whereby he was privileged from death and mortality, the common lot of the rest of the world. And therefore we need not question by what authority Elias executed the sentence of the law upon the idolatrous priests of Baal, though he was neither supreme magistrate himself, nor yet commissioned by him.

And thus I have gone over ten of the principal scripture instances, by which our modern enthusiasts would defend their lawless irregular actings. Seven of which I have yet proved justifiable upon the principles of common right and morality: so that there remain but three, to wit, of Abraham, Samson, and Elias; the justification of which must be derived from the immediate and extraordinary impulse of the Spirit. And these were persons so eminent for the extraordinary presence of God with them, in so many other passages of their lives, that we may well venture the result of the whole matter upon this; and allow our enthusiasts to act as much besides the rule of God's written law as ever they did, provided they will give us such undeniable evidences of an extraordinary spirit moving them, as they in their several ages gave the world. For this we do and must constantly deny, that the authority of such an extraordinary spirit was ever owned or admitted upon the mere affirmation or word of the persons pretending to it: but upon one or both of these conditions: namely, 1. That the pretenders to it had otherwise, by several signs or miracles, proved themselves to have been acted and inspired by God after an extraordinary way: or, 2. That the actions, for which they make this plea, were commended and owned by the subsequent approbation of God himself.

Neither of which conditions being now producible by the enthusiasts of our times, it follows, that those scripture examples are of no force at all to warrant them in their pretences to an extraordinary spirit; nor are arguments to prove any thing so much as the knavery of those who make this pretence, and the folly of those who allow it.

And thus I have at length finished the second and main general head proposed for the discussion of the words; which was to show what it is for men to be led by the Spirit. I proceed now to

III. The third, which is to declare, *what is meant in the text by*

being the sons of God. The relation of father and son in scripture is taken in two ways, properly, or improperly. In the proper acception of it, it is founded upon generation: but improperly taken, it is founded (for the most part) upon one of these two things, adoption or imitation. The latter of which, I conceive, gives the denomination here, though by consequence also it infers the persons so denominated to be sons by adoption. Now for this sonship by imitation, which consists in the cognition or conformity of a man's actions to the example or will of another, we have it fully and emphatically set forth to us in John viii., where Christ proves the Jews not to have been the sons of Abraham, because they did not the works of Abraham: but to have been of their father the devil, because by doing of the works of the devil, they had made themselves his sons. And the same is yet more fully expressed in 1 John iii. 10: "In this are the children of God manifest, and the children of the devil." And what *this* is he tells us in the foregoing verses, in the 8th of which he says, that "he who committeth sin is of the devil;" and in the 9th, that "he who is born of God sinneth not:" which negative term of *not sinning* is, in the 7th verse, positively expressed by "working righteousness:" and in the 10th particularly, by the acts of charity, "in loving our brother." Which is a comprehensive term, implying all the duties of the second table, as loving God takes in and comprehends all the duties of the first; according to the best and most authentic explication given of this subject by our Saviour himself. He therefore, in the apostle's sense, is the son of God who does the works of God; and he does the works of God, who loves his brother; and he loves his brother or neighbour (which in scripture are terms synonymous) who pays obedience to his governors; who neither kills nor mischiefs his neighbour in his person, nor defiles his bed, nor invades his property, nor traduces his good name, nor yet covets or casts a longing eye upon any part of his substance or estate: but on the contrary prosecutes him with all the acts of justice, love, and charity, which oppose the forementioned injuries and violences prohibited in the law.

Now this being the genuine explication of the words, let us cast them into argumentation. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God," says the apostle, "they are the sons of God." The proposition is universal, and perhaps also the terms of it convertible; but whether they are or no, I am sure, it being a right and legitimate way of arguing, from the removal of the consequent to the denial of the antecedent, this inference must needs be firm and good; that those who are not the sons of God are not led by the Spirit. Now whether those who rebel, and prosecute their rebellions with murders, rapine, and sacrilege, who plunder their neighbours and perjure themselves, who libel church and state, and throw all order into confusion, can be accounted the

sons of God in that scripture sense, in which those only are the sons of God, who do the works of God, let any one judge. If they are not the sons of God, I have shown that they are not led by the Spirit: but if they think they can prove themselves the sons of God, while they practise these and the like enormities (as no doubt they either do or would persuade themselves); I will undertake to prove, that such sons of God are certain heirs of damnation.

IV. Come we now to the fourth and last thing proposed, which is *to gather some conclusions by way of use and inference from the foregoing particulars.* The conclusions shall be two.

1. That persons thus pretending to act by an inward voice, or impulse of the Spirit, in opposition to the rule of God's written word, are by no means to be endured in the communion of a Christian church, as being the highest scandal and reproach to religion, indeed a much higher and greater than drunkards, swearers, or robbers upon the highway. For though these persons by such practices disobey, and consequently dishonour the religion they profess; yet they pretend not that their villanies have any countenance or warrant from religion, so as thereby to lose their guilt, and cease to be villanies. But now, such as pretend to be led by the extraordinary motions of the Spirit, do by that affirm every thing that they do to be lawful and suitable to the mind of God; those very actions, which in other men are sinful and abominable, as done by themselves through the authority of the Spirit, putting on quite another nature: so that their killing is no murder; their plundering their neighbour no robbery; their violating his bed, no adultery; their resisting and fighting against their king, no rebellion; for the Spirit, by an inward voice or motion dissolving the bonds of those laws which tie up other men from these actions, does in the mean time authorize and empower them to act all these things innocently, piously, and perhaps meritoriously too; than which it is impossible for the wickedness of man to utter or conceive any thing more highly opprobrious to God and to religion. Villains may fly to the altar to escape the punishment of their sin, but that they should fly to religion to excuse and take off the guilt of their sin, this is to make the altar itself a party in the crime, and the Almighty, not so much a pardoner, as a patron of their guilt. This is certainly next to the sin against the Holy Ghost (if that sin may be committed now-a-days), and possibly one kind of that sin itself. For if the Pharisees are said to have sinned against the Holy Ghost by blaspheming him, and that blaspheming consisted in their attributing those works which were done by the Holy Ghost, to the power of the devil; pray, what difference, in point of blasphemy, is there between that and the ascribing those villanies, which are done by the instigation of the devil, to the impulse and suggestion of the Holy Ghost? For my part, I can conceive no more nor other difference

in the blasphemy of these two assertions, than there is in the same way, as it leads from Thebes to Athens, and from Athens to Thebes. For the Spirit can be no less dishonoured and blasphemed by having the works of the devil ascribed to him, than by having his own works ascribed to the devil.

2. The other conclusion or inference is this ; that as these pretenders are upon no terms to be endured in the church, for the scandal they bring upon religion ; so neither are they to be tolerated in the state, for the pernicious influence they have upon society. Whether the original right of civil government were from compact or no, has been disputed ; but that the actual subsistence and continuance of it stands upon compact observed and made good, is past question : I mean that compact and agreement, whereby all agree to submit and be subject to the same laws. For if one half of a nation agree to live in subjection to such laws, and the other half refuses all submission to the same, and both parts be equally strong, the government must of necessity fall in pieces. And upon this account, no subject has any right to claim protection of the government he is under, any longer than he submits to the laws of that government.

But now the enthusiasts we speak of, pretending to be led and governed immediately by the Spirit, whose inward voice is the only rule and law they hold themselves obliged to live and act by ; by virtue of which also they plead themselves authorized to do many things, which the written laws of God and man forbid, and to omit many things which the same written laws enjoin ; with what face and confidence can they expect the protection of the government they live under, when they profess themselves to live by a law wholly differing from those laws, to the observers of which alone that government promises protection ? Is it reason, that my neighbour should live at peace by me, and enjoy his estate only by my conscience of, and obedience to that law, which forbids me to rob or steal from him ; and he in the mean time proceed by an inward law, which exempts him from the same obligation, and allows him, when he pleases, to seize upon my estate, and rifle me ? I say, is there, can there be any reason, that such a fellow should be safe from me by my subjection to the laws of my country, and I not be mutually safe from him by his subjection to the same ? No, certainly ; where the benefit of the law is his, the obligation of it ought to reach him too, or there will be no equality, and consequently no society. He, therefore, who shall presume to own himself thus led by an inward voice or instinct of the Spirit, in opposition to the laws enacted by the civil power, has forfeited all right to any protection from that power, and has, *ipso facto*, outlawed himself, and accordingly as an outlaw ought he to be dealt with ; and if by these impulses and inspirations he shall dare to offend capitally, the magistrate must assert his rights, and vindicate the prerogative of his abused laws with the gibbet or the halter, the axe or the faggot ;

and this, if any thing, will cure such villains of that which they call the Spirit.

Infinite have been the disturbances given the world in general, and this poor kingdom in particular, by crafty persons sowing their hypocrisy by pretences of religion; of all which pretences none have been so frequent and fatally successful, as the two grand ones—one of the Spirit, the other of tender consciences; concerning the highest pretenders to both of which I shall say no more, than that it is well for them, that no sort of lies whatsoever can choke them; and well for the magistrate, that something else can; there being no casuist comparable to the minister of justice, to answer the sturdy scruples of an enthusiast disposed to rebel. For otherwise, as to matter of duty, whether to God or man, there can be no doubt or difficulty about it at all; that rule of our Saviour being infallible, for the discovery of all such pretenders and spiritual cheats, that “by their fruits ye shall know them.” And the “fruits of the Spirit” (St. Paul tells us, Gal. v. 22, 23) “are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, temperance,” and the like; fruits which never grew in the same soil with rebellion, murder, and sacrilege. For, as the same apostle says, “those who live by the Spirit, will walk by the Spirit” too, since no man subsists by one vital principle, and acts by another.

To which eternal Spirit of truth and holiness, together with the Father and the Son, be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON XXV.

THANKFULNESS FOR PAST MERCIES THE WAY TO OBTAIN FUTURE BLESSINGS.

[Preached at Westminster Abbey, Nov. 5, 1688.]

ISAIAH v. 4.

What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?

I CANNOT think it the chief, much less the sole business of this day, to declaim and make invectives against the persons whose villany occasioned the solemnity of it. Their action was indeed bad enough, had we not lived to see it transcended by many worse; so that were not protestantism in itself a better religion than popery, it would have but little advantage from most of the persons who profess it. For are we less proud, covetous, or rebellious than the papists? I am sure, if many that call themselves protestants were so, we must make our reckoning from before sixteen hundred and forty, or despair of finding them so since. All the wicked arts of the Jesuits have been first sanctified, and then acted under the splendid names of the power of godliness, Christian liberty, and the sceptre and kingdom of Jesus Christ, with other such words, as have written their meaning with the sword's point, and now stand legible to posterity in letters of blood. Nor ought any to wonder that I ascribe these reformers' practices to Jesuitish principles; it being so well known that the Jesuit never acts himself more than under another person, name, and profession.

Declamatory satires may indeed seem useless to all purposes whatsoever; it being impossible to revile away a distemper, or to cure a disease by an invective. But were they never so proper; though the church of England, whose principles and practices breathe nothing but loyalty to princes, may justify any hard speeches against the sons of Rome; yet surely the papists are not fit to be reviled by, nor indeed before many amongst us, who have acted worse things, and that with the aggravation of acting them under a better religion; unless it could be fit to arraign one malefactor before another, who is himself a greater. I wish, that while we speak loud against those of the Romish church, we could at the same time inwardly abhor and detest their impieties, and yet imitate their discretion: and be ashamed, that those sons of darkness should be so much wiser in their generation than we, that account ourselves such children of light.

For be they what they will, it is evident, that they manage things at a higher rate of prudence than to fear a change in their church government every six months, or to be persuaded by any arguments to cut their throats with their own hands, or amongst all their indulgences to afford any to their implacable enemies.

My business at this time shall be to make the mercy of the present day an occasion of declaring our great unworthiness, not of this only, but of all other mercies; and that by a parallel instance; if so be our wickedness proves not too big for a parallel, and of that bulk as to laugh at examples and baffle all comparisons. For indeed our sins seem as much to surpass those of the Jews,—the persons here upbraided by God,—as all men would judge it more monstrous and intolerable, for a vineyard to answer the dresser's labour and expectation with a crop of thorns, than with a vintage of wild grapes. The words that I have here fixed upon are a vehement complaint of God, uttered against the Jewish church and nation, his peculiar and most endeared people; and accordingly offer these two things to our consideration.

I. The form and manner of the complaint.

II. The complaint itself.

I. And first for *the form and manner of it*. It runs in a pathetic interrogatory exclamation; which way of expression naturally and amongst men importing in it surprise and a kind of confusion in the thoughts of him who utters it, must needs be grounded upon that which is the ground and foundation of all surprise, which I conceive is reducible to these two heads: 1. The strangeness: 2. The indignity of any thing, when it first occurs to our apprehensions.

1. And first for the strangeness of it. Whatsoever falls out either above or beside the common trace of human observation, and so puts the reason upon new methods of discourse, is that which we call strange, and such as causes surprise: which is nothing else but a disturbance of the mind upon its inability to give a present account of the reason of what it sees first offered to it; from whence it is, that as a man comes still to know more, the strangeness of things to him grows less; and consequently nothing can be strange to him to whom nothing is unknown. But how then come we here to find God himself under a surprise, and omniscience, as it were, brought to a nonplus? Surely it could be no ordinary thing, that should thus put an infinite wisdom upon making inquiries. Nor indeed was it. For could any thing be imagined more monstrous, and by all rational principles unresolvable, than upon a most rich and fertile soil, fenced and enclosed against all injuries from abroad, dressed and manured by the finger of God himself, and watered with all the influences of a propitious heaven; I say, could any thing be more prodigious, than in such a place to see a fig-tree bear a thistle, or the fruit of the

bramble load the branches of the vine? This is a thing directly against all the principles of mere nature, though not encouraged by the assistance of art: and therefore even the God of nature seems to stand amazed at the unnatural irregularity of such a monstrous event. But,

2. The other ground of such interrogatory exclamations is the unusual indignity of a thing: this being as great an anomaly in the morality of actions, as the former was in the nature of things; and therefore as that passion of the mind, raised by the strangeness of a thing, is properly called wonder, so that which commences upon this, is properly indignation. It being a great trespass upon decency and ingenuity, and all those rules that ought to govern those intercourses of rational beings; which are all crossed, and even dissolved, by that one grand and fundamental destroyer of society and morality, which is ingratitude. For society subsists by the mutual interchange of good offices, by which the wants and concerns of men are mutually supplied and served; that being the only thing that unites and keeps men together in civilized societies, who otherwise would range and raven like bears or wolves, and never but to seize a greater prey.

Now ingratitude is the thing here exclaimed against with so much abhorrence; a passion, that has all in it that wonder has, with the addition of something more; wonder resting merely in the speculation of things, this proceeding also to a practical aversion and flight from them. But since a sinner is no strange sight, nor can it pass for a wonder to see men wicked, what cannot be found in the bare nature of things must be sought for in their degree; and therefore it must needs be some superlative height of wickedness, which drew from God this loud exclamation. What that is, will appear in the prosecution of the next thing, which is,

II. *The complaint itself*; for which there are these things to be considered.

1. The person complaining, who was God himself.

2. The persons complained of, which were his peculiar church and people.

3. The ground of this complaint; which was their unworthy and unsuitable returns made to the dealings of God with them.

4. And lastly, the issue and consequent of it; which was the confusion and destruction of the persons so graciously dealt with, and so justly complained of.

Of each of which briefly in their order.

1. And first for the person complaining, God himself. It must be confessed, that according to the strict nature and reason of things, as he who knows all things cannot wonder, so neither can he, who can do all things, properly complain; weakness being the cause of complaining, as ignorance is of wonder. Yet

God is here pleased to assume the posture of both; and therefore the case must needs be extraordinary. But how possible soever it may be for infinite power to complain, it is certainly impossible for infinite goodness to complain without a cause. So that we read the indubitable justness of the complaint in the condition of the person who makes it. A person transcendently wise, just, and merciful, who cannot be deceived in the measures he takes of things and persons, nor prevaricate with those measures by speaking beside the proportion of what he judges. And, after all, he it is that complains, who has power enough to render all complaint needless; who has an omnipotence to repair to, and an outstretched arm to plead his cause in a higher dialect than that of words and fair expostulations. We see therefore the person here complaining, even the great and omnipotent God: and we may be sure, that where God is the plaintiff, no creature can, with either sense or safety, be the defendant.

2. The next thing to be considered is, the persons here complained of; and they were the Jews, the peculiar and select people of God; a people that had no cause to complain, and therefore the more unfit to give any to be complained of. From the beginning of God's taking them into his care and patronage, they were fed and maintained at the immediate cost and charges of heaven; they were dieted with miracles, with new inventions and acts of providence, the course of nature itself still veiling to their necessities; the heaven, the sea, and all things dispensing with the standing laws of their creation to do them service, in order to their serving of God. But it seems it was easier to fetch honey out of the bowels of the earth, to broach the rock, or draw rivers from a flint, than to draw obedience from them.

They were persons who wore all the marks of the particular incommunicable kindnesses of heaven: "God had not dealt so with any nation," says David, Psalm cxlvii. 20. They seemed as an exception from (or rather above) the common rule of Providence. A people whom God courted, espoused, and married, and by a yet greater wonder, continued to court them even after marriage. God thought nothing too good for them to enjoy, nor thought they any thing too bad for themselves to commit. They were a people culled and chosen out of the rest of the world: in short, they were in some sense a gathered congregation, whom God thus horribly complains of.

3. The third thing to be considered is the ground of this complaint raised against them; which was their unworthy, unsuitable returns made to the dealings of God with them. Which will appear, first, by considering God's dealing with them; and secondly, their dealing with God; and so by confronting them both together, we shall give them all the advantage of contraries set off by nearness and comparison. We will begin with God's dealing with them, which consists of these three things.

(1.) That he committed his sacred word and oracles to them; so that when all the world round about them had no other religion, than what they either derived from their own errors, or at best from their conjectures, these were taught by immediate and infallible revelation; neither confounding themselves in the notion of God's nature, so as to own a multiplicity of deities; nor yet of his worship, so as to serve him by absurd, and, what is worse, by impious practices, which yet the best and the most-reputed of the Gentiles placed all their devotion in. In sum, they had that "sure word of prophecy," which was "able to make them wise to salvation;" while the neighbouring nations had such a religion, as neither represented them wise in this world, nor like to be saved in the next.

And yet as pure and as divine as the Jewish worship was, it had many more ceremonies than ours; nor do we find any proviso for the abatement of the least of them, to gratify any tender conscience whatsoever; though yet the nature of God, who was to be worshipped, and of the souls of men, who were to pay him that worship, were the same then that they are now, and consequently apt to be helped or hindered by the same means; which one consideration is enough to cut the sinew of all the pitiful arguments that the nonconforming comprehensive sages did, or do, or ever will produce. But we understand the men; they strike indeed at the church, but their aim is further, and, if God prevents not, their blow will follow it.

How this profane atheistical age may rate things, I know not; but believe it, the accounts of England run high in the books of Heaven, for the religion which God has planted amongst us. A religion refined from all that superfluous dross which the Romish is generally and justly charged with; and yet so prudent in its economy and constitution, as not to leave itself wholly unprovided of decency in circumstantialia, which are the necessary appendants of all human actions; and consequently, being left to the arbitrement of every man's various fancy, would be so differing, loose, and extravagant, that should but a sober heathen view such a divine worship, he would certainly say (as St. Paul speaks), "were we not mad?" while with amazement he beheld one man paying his reverence to an infinite Majesty sitting, another expressing the same reverence, forsooth, with his hat on his head; postures which pass for affront and contumely, even in our addresses to an earthly superior.

But let the doctrine, discipline, and rituals of the church of England be searched to the bottom by rational and impartial heads, and then let them, if they please, produce any thing justly offensive to a conscience tender not to the degree of rebellion. God will one day reckon with us for the church privileges we enjoy, and for our religion, which is unquestionably the best, the purest, and the most primitive in the world; how ill soever it

has been used by some, who were concerned upon more accounts than one to encourage it. In this respect therefore, our case falls in with the Jews, that God has vouchsafed both them and us the greatest of blessings, the richest and most improveable of talents, even a pure, a clear, and an uncorrupted religion. God's regard to which (for ought I know) was the chief, if not the only cause of the mercy we commemorate this day.

(2.) As God planted his vineyard with this so generous a plant, so he was not wanting to refresh and influence it with the continual dews of his mercy, and the showers of his choicest blessings. The miracles of Egypt and the Red Sea, the Jews' frequent deliverances from captivity, from the insolence of the Philistines and the Midianites, and from the scourge of nations, the Assyrians, were enough, not only to have argued, but even to have shamed them into the highest returns of gratitude and obedience.

And has not God dealt as mercifully and as gloriously with these three nations? So that we are an island not only encompassed with a sea of waters, but also surrounded with an ocean of mercies. From the day that God first vouchsafed us the settlement of the reformed religion under the reign of Queen Elizabeth, how has he been like "a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night," both to guide and protect us in the profession of it! For can we forget the deliverance of eighty-eight, and those victorious mercies, more invincible than the armada designed to invade and enslave us; when the seas and winds had a command from heaven to fight under the English colours, and to manifest the strength of God in our weakness? Or can we pass over that never to be forgot blessing of this day, which brought to light those hidden and fatal works of darkness, that would have ruined both king and church, and the three estates at a blow; when that God, who humbles himself enough in beholding what is done upon the earth, was pleased to stoop yet lower, and to behold what was doing under it too; and so by a mature providence, stepping in between the match and the fatal train; to catch us, as it were, a brand out of the fire; or rather, by the greater mercy of prevention, to keep the destructive element from kindling upon us; and thereby to give us both an opportunity and obligation of eternally celebrating the mercy of such a glorious rescue from a plot, in all the parts of it so black and hideous, that the sober papists themselves ever did, and do, and I believe ever will, profess an utter abhorrence of it, how ready soever they may be to repeat it.

But the divine mercy has not taken up here; it has delivered us from a blacker and a greater calamity; a calamity, the memory of which has even blown up the gunpowder treason itself; I mean the late horrid and for ever accursed rebellion, contrived, acted, and carried on by persons and principles worse, and more

destructive to monarchy, than those of the papists. For the crowns of Spain and of France thrive and flourish, for all the popish religion settled in those kingdoms: but the sanctified actors of our late confusions were such as tore the crown from the king's head, and his head from his shoulders, and would, upon the same advantages, undoubtedly do the same again. The least finger of fanaticism bearing harder and heavier upon monarchy, than the whole loins of popery: God deliver us from them both!

Now surely by these miraculous instances of mercy, God would fain provoke us to such a degree of piety, as might prevent his justice from consigning us over to a relapse into the same sad effects of the same sins. For can we think that God detected and dashed the conspiracy of this day, only to enable the sons of luxury and ingratitude perpetually to conspire against him? Did he break the neck of the late rebellion, that we might transcribe their actings towards their king into our behaviour towards God? Did he deliver the sword into our hands, that we might thrust it into the bowels of his church? Did he scatter all those anti-monarchical sects of presbytery, independency, and anabaptism, and other fanatics, by whatsoever names they stand distinguished, and (such is their good fortune) in a fair way dignified too? I say, did he scatter all these locusts, that we might court their return, recall our old plagues, and fall back into our former Cromwellian confusions? If this be our lot, we must charge our misery upon none but ourselves; for God would have delivered, nay, actually has delivered us; but it seems, even in spite of providence and mercy itself, we are resolved not to be delivered.

(3.) The third course of God's dealing with the persons here complained of in the text was by judgments. It is possible that the most generous of plants, fixed in the richest soil, and visited with the kindest and most benign influence of sun and weather, may yet not fructify, till they are pruned and cut, and rid of those superfluous branches and suckers, which steal and intercept that juice and sap, which, according to the prime intention of nature, should pass into fruit. And therefore the great husbandman of souls takes this course with his spiritual vines, to add the pruning-hook of his judgments to the more gentle manurings of his mercy: and when watering will not do, to dig about them. And it is his last course; after which, if they still continue barren, comes the sentence of extirpation, positive and irreversible, "Cut them down, why cumber they the ground?"

Now that God has not been wanting to endeavour our reduction and fertility by these means also, we can call in many great and sad experiences to attest. For not to mention the sun of mercy, almost as soon as risen in the first reformation of religion, presently setting again in blood in the cruel reign of Queen Mary; nor yet to mention the festivity of almost every succeeding prince's coronation, presently followed by a dismal sweeping

plague; as if sent purposely to upbraid us with the mortality of our joys, by casting so sudden a cloud over our triumphs, and dashing our wine with our own tears: I say, not to insist upon these more remote instances of the divine judgments, let us cast our eyes upon those latter ones, much surpassing all the former. And here we shall see three kingdoms for some years bleeding by an unnatural civil war, weltering in their own blood, and wasted and spoiled by the fury of their own inhabitants; a calamity so universal, that, like a deluge, it involved all sorts, estates, and conditions of men; from the prince to the peasant; from him that wielded the sceptre, to him that held the plough. And this war we shall find concluded with the success of the rebel cause and army; which in the midst of peace continued upon the kingdom all the miseries of war; acting all the cruelties of banishments, imprisonments, sequestrations, and decimations, upon all those that durst own the least loyalty to their prince, or affection to the church.

And when it pleased Providence to blow over this storm in the happy restoration of both, it was not long before the destroying angel stretched forth his hand over us in that woful mortality, caused by a spreading devouring sickness that ceased not to destroy and mow down thousands before it, without stay or stop; till at length it gave over, as it were, out of very weariness with killing.

And when we were still unconcerned after all these blows falling so thick and heavy upon us; a fire, more dreadful than all, breaks forth upon the metropolis and glory of our nation, the great magazine of our strength and riches, and makes as great a mortality of houses, as the sickness had made of inhabitants.

And, lastly, when the growing impiety of the nation had baffled this judgment also, and brought us out of this fiery furnace with all our dross still about us, God commissions the enemy, the enemy whom he had so often delivered into our hands, to come and outbrave us at our very doors, and to fire those ornaments and bulwarks of our English nation even under our noses. A disgrace and a blot upon us not to be fetched out by the fire that burnt them, nor to be washed off by the whole ocean that carried them: and it is well that there followed not a destruction greater than the disgrace.

We have seen and felt what an angry God can do: and if we still sin on, and make new judgments necessary, so that God can neither fire, nor plague, nor fight us by sea or land out of our sins, what can be expected, but that he, who hitherto has been only a correcting, should, in the next place, be a consuming fire?

Having thus shown how God dealt with his people, his vineyard, and his beloved inheritance, namely, by instruction, by mercies, and by judgments, (so that he might well make good this his saying,

“What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done?”) and withal having shown, how parallel to those his proceedings with us have been, let us now come to see how both of us have dealt with God by way of return.

Three things the text remarks of them: (1.) Great injustice and oppression, in verse 7; (2.) Great rapacity and covetousness, in verse 8; (3.) Great luxury and sensuality, in verses 11, 12.

(1.) And first, God charges them with injustice and oppression; though a sin of all others least to be expected from them, that they, who had so lately groaned under the rod of oppression, should presently turn oppressors themselves: and that in the most cruel and inhuman instances of it; “neither judging the cause of the fatherless, nor supporting the widow;” as this prophet tells them in ch. i. 23. It seems no plea *sub forma pauperis* could thrive or succeed in their courts; they had no commiseration for those who had suffered the same bondage and captivity, and smarted under the same tyranny with themselves.

We have had mercies, indeed great and glorious, in his majesty's restoration: but have those been any gainers by the deliverance who were the greatest losers by the war? No (in a far different sense from that of the scripture) “to him only that has shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly.” But if a man's loyalty has stripped him of his estate, his interest, or relations, then, like the lame man at the pool of Bethesda, every one steps in before him.

We keep days of thanksgiving for our deliverance from the powder-plot, and for his majesty's return, and the like; but do these experiments of God's goodness to us provoke ours to our brethren, our loyal, suffering, undone brethren? to whom the greatest kindness had been the strictest justice. But such have been our methods of treating them, that we must expect the same declaration, that God makes in verse 7, that “he looked for judgment; but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry;” and it is well, if it proves not a cry to heaven for vengeance.

(2.) The second thing here charged by God upon his ungrateful people was their abominable covetousness. “Every one” (says the prophet Isaiah, i. 23) “loveth gifts, and followed after rewards:” and here again he charges them for joining “house to house, and field to field;” and that deservedly, for the usual way of men's doing so is by their joining sin to sin, and extortion to extortion. A course equally offensive to God, and grievous to man; it being no more possible that a nation should flourish when the wealth of it is grasped into a few hands, than that the body should thrive when the nutriment due to all parts of it is gathered into two or three swelling wens or imposthumes. The imputation of covetousness, I well know, makes a great and a tragical noise, when it is maliciously and falsely cast upon a

certain sort and profession of men, who (God knows) for much the greatest part of them have scarce any thing to be covetous of. But surely this is far more likely to be found amongst those who can raise great estates and families out of nothing, and transmit the fruits of their sin and rapine to their posterity.

How much covetousness endangered this nation even in reference to this very business of the powder treason, those words of king James sufficiently demonstrate; who, considering how far the conspiracy had gone, and how near we were to ruin, and how narrowly we escaped it, is reported to have said, with some heat, but more reason, that "this horrid plot might have been earlier discovered, had not some of his officers loved their money, or their own persons, much more than their country." And the truth is, considering how gross the action was, being a conveyance of so much wood and so many barrels to such a certain place, adding withal the number of the persons engaged in the plot, it is a miracle it was not searched into and found out before. I am sure upon this and many other accounts, we have cause to adore the truth of that divine aphorism of that eminent prelate and great martyr, both for king and church, archbishop Laud, who lived and acted up to all that he said, even to the sealing it with his last blood: "The Lord," says he, "deliver us from covetous and fearful men: the covetous will betray us for money, the fearful for security."

(3.) And lastly, the third thing charged by God upon those unworthy persons spoken of in the text, was their excessive luxury and sensuality; pursued by them even to the degree of a trade or a profession; for in the eleventh verse of this fifth chapter, we have them rising up early, and sitting up late at their cups; such painful and laborious drunkards were they; and to the clattering of their cups we have the additional music of the harp and viol in the twelfth verse, where we find them feasting and gratifying all their senses, till they had utterly silenced their reason; and, which is the natural consequent of voluptuousness, wholly abandoned all thoughts of Providence: as it is in the same verse, "not regarding the work of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands."

It is like they might spend their time, as many amongst us do now-a-days, in dressing and adorning themselves, in preparing for the great and weighty work of balls, and dances, and then in showing their little wit by scoffing at God, and goodness, and all religion.

But did God vouchsafe such transcendent blessings either to them or us, only to be improved into the food and fuel of intemperance? Did God keep off our enemies by sea and land, that we might compass both to satisfy our unruly appetites? There have been rumours and fears of French armies, but they are the French fashions and the French vices that have invaded, and conquered, and spoiled our land; while every one almost makes this his sole

business, employment, and glory, to do wickedly, and to "fare deliciously every day;" a trade which is sure to go on apace, though all others languish and decay.

Such surely are neither the persons nor practices that moved God to do such great things for us; who fills no man's coffers only to furnish him out in every new vain dress or ridiculous fashion. For, as St. Paul says, "does God take care for oxen?" So we may be sure, that much less does he take such care for apes and monkeys, for goats and swine; for such as are good for nothing, but either mimically to imitate their neighbours' fooleries, or to immerse themselves in all kind of lascivious and debauched living. But if these be the courses we are resolved upon, we should do well to strike this and such other festival days of public deliverance out of our rubric, which stand there only to blush for our guilt, and upbraid us for our ingratitude.

Thus at length I have given you some account of the grounds of that loud and heavy complaint here commenced by God himself against his peculiar darling people. Namely, their unworthy unsuitable returns made to God's dealings with them; that when he endeavoured to inform and guide them with the word of his eternal truth, to endear them with his mercies, and to discipline and reclaim them with his judgments, they were so incorrigible and even impenetrable by all these methods, that they let loose the reins to all the filth and baseness that the corruption of their nature could engulf them in; defying heaven with their clamorous oppressions, burdening the earth with their rapines and extortions; and lastly, abusing themselves and all the good creatures of God with their insatiable luxury and intemperance.

And now, if we think that the injured goodness of God could, after all this, satisfy itself with bare complaints, we may conclude that it had something else to complain of besides their wickedness, even his own justice; which was too far concerned to put up such provocations, without much another kind of revenging the injuries done to his abused mercy. And therefore we have God here come to his final resolution; namely, to destroy and ruin those vile persons; which is the sad issue and consequent of the foregoing complaint, and the

(4.) And last thing proposed by us to be handled. This dreadful proceeding of God to them, we have fully set down in the fifth and sixth verses, "And now go to," says God; "I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: and I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned nor digged, but there shall come up briers and thorns; I will also command the clouds, that they rain no rain upon it." In a word, he would utterly bereave them of all their defences, and expose them to all the miseries of a defenceless condition.

Now the defences of a nation are twofold : (1.) Its laws ; (2.) Its military force. In the destruction of both of which, history tells us how miserably the Jewish nation suffered, till at length, overpowered with continual invasions, their commonwealth and government was quite dissolved.

(1.) And first for their laws (which in every government are as the sinews and nerves, binding together all the parts and members of the body politic), the execution of them amongst the Jews was at length wholly neglected ; so that they stood only to upbraid the weakness of the magistrate, and as trophies of a victorious reigning impiety, much too strong for them : which laws, had they had their full course and career, must have borne down all disorder before them, and made "judgment run down like a river, and righteousness like a mighty stream." But they by new unheard-of methods of policy set themselves only to suppress their laws, and to secure themselves by the rotten short arts of connivance, winking at the grossest disorders so long, till they had even winked themselves blind ; and indulged wickedness into that bulk and height, that, overtopping authority and scorning all control, it was itself only a law to itself.

(2.) And then in the next place, this introduced a dissolution of their military power ; no persons ever growing into a fitness for war under a licentious and ungoverned peace : whereupon we find them run down by every potent adversary. The Assyrians, the Egyptians, the Persians, the Grecians, and the Romans, all successively vanquished and enslaved them.

And then they found, that neither their insulting over their poor brethren, their joining house to house, nor their chanting to the harp and viol, their merry meetings and profuse feastings, their gaudy dresses, and damning oaths, could enable them to look an active, hardy, and resolved enemy in the face.

And now as the walls and safeguard of a nation are its laws and military force, so upon a failure of them ensue two fatal and destructive evils.

1. A growth of sects and factions ; for as soon as God had pulled up the hedge of his vineyard, we find it in the sixth verse of this chapter overrun with briars and thorns ; things not only useless, but hurtful ; such as instead of refreshing or feeding the husbandman, only rend and tear his flesh ; and not content only to grow, will at length aspire also to govern ; it being natural to the vilest bramble to affect royalty and supremacy.

The Jewish church and nation was at length pestered with Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, and Essenians, all rending the unity of the church, and troubling the peace of the state, much like that rabble of sects and names now-a-days amongst us, the blessed effects of the late bloody reformation ; which, how they swarm, and to what a languishing condition they have brought this once flourishing kingdom, every judicious person sees, and

every pious laments. And, which is the greatest mischief of all, we still take pretences of conscience for current from those who had conspired and rebelled against the government, murdered one king, and banished another, and to this day have not declared the least repentance for any of all those things which they have done. But since our physicians think the best way of curing a disease is to pamper it, the Lord in mercy prepare the kingdom to suffer, what he by miracle only can prevent.

2. The other mischief consequent upon God's pulling down the wall of his vineyard, was its being trodden down. It was first to be choked up by a growing evil from within, and next to be laid waste by a force from abroad. The non-execution of laws caused the first, and the failure of power occasioned the next. How deep the Jews drank of this cup, has been already hinted; even till the whole nation was drunk with God's fury: and if so, could any thing prepare them for, and expose them to a more dreadful fall; and yet they had the experience of as great mercies from God, as ever this day produced to England; and I am confident they did not (because indeed they could not) abuse them more.

Now what rational ground we can have to presume upon greater kindness and forbearance than God vouchsafed his own vineyard, I believe it will pose any of us to tell. We have lived under a long sunshine, and God knows that it has ripened our sins apace. Nor have the judgments used by him been hitherto able to reduce us, though they have been so various, that now there remains not many more behind; but yet those which do remain are such, that if God brings them upon us, they will indeed leave no work for any more. In the meantime it is surely our grand concernment to prevent the divine justice, before the last and fatal sentence goes out against us; and so breaking off our crying national sins by a commensurate national repentance, to reconcile ourselves to our great Judge; even that Judge, who has mercy for relenting sinners, but repays the obstinate, and those who hate him, to their face.

To whom therefore be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON XXVI.

THE NATURE, CAUSES, AND CONSEQUENCES OF ENVY.

JAMES III. 16.

For where envy and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

OF the sins and ill qualities that the corruption of man's nature has poisoned and polluted his mind with, there is none of greater malignity and baseness than envy. For the condemnation of which we need not bring it to the bar of religion and Christianity; there being enough to sentence and condemn it from bare reason and philosophy.

For the prosecution of the words, I shall do these four things :

I. I shall show what envy is, and wherein the nature of it does consist.

II. What are the grounds and causes of it.

III. What are its effects and consequences. And,

IV. Lastly, make some use and improvement of the whole.

I. For the first of these ; *what envy is, and wherein the nature of it does consist.* And for this we shall find, that moralists generally give us this description of it; that it is a depraved affection or passion of the mind, disposing a man to hate or malign another for some good or excellency belonging to him, which the envious person judges him unworthy of, and which for the most part he wants himself. Or yet more briefly ; envy is a certain grief of mind conceived upon the sight of another's felicity, whether real or supposed : so that we see that it consists partly of hatred, and partly of grief. In respect of which two passions, and the proper actings of both, we are to observe, that as it shows itself in hatred, it strikes at the person envied ; but as it affects a man in the nature of grief, it recoils and does execution upon the envier ; both of them are hostile affections, and vexatious to the breast which harbours them. Acts of love indeed have naturally something of pleasure still attending them, and please the mind, while they proceed from it. But no man perfectly enjoys himself, while he hates another ; hatred being a quality that sours the whole soul, and puts all the faculties of it, as it were, into a posture of offence. It is really war begun, and commonly so, before it is proclaimed ; it gives the first charge, and strikes the first stroke in all acts of hostility. And

can there be any thing of enjoyment in all this? A battle certainly can be no present pleasure, though it should end in a victory. And during a man's actual pursuit of his hatred, he is much in the same condition, restless and unquiet; his head contriving, and his hands laying about them to do the hated person all the mischief he can: in a word, he lives in the fire, fighting and fencing, and forced to carry on a constant opposition. For hatred being too active and mercurial a passion to lie still, never takes up with the bare theory of mischief, with sluggish thoughts and secret grudges, but, as opportunity serves, will certainly be doing; and till such opportunity falls in with it (which frequently it does not) it must needs afflict, and grate, and feed upon the man himself, and make him as miserable as he wishes others.

And thus hatred having done its part towards the disturbance of the mind in which it is, the other passion of grief is hereupon presently set on work: for when any of the other passions are defeated about their respective objects or operations, then this passion immediately comes upon the stage, and takes its turn to act. So that, when a man cannot vent his rage outwardly, he is sure to grieve and mourn, and bleed inwardly; like a wretch falling on his own sword, because he cannot thrust it into the body of his enemy. This is the nature of envy, always exerting itself in and by these two afflicting passions; first, in the way of hatred carrying its mischievous influence abroad, and then in the way of grief playing the tyrant at home; but whether in the one or in the other, guilt and sadness are its inseparable companions: it being utterly impossible, upon all principles both of nature and religion, for an envious person to have either a good conscience or a cheerful mind.

But to show the malignity of this ill quality yet further, it is observable, that in all or most of the other passions of the mind, there is, as to the general nature of them, an indifference to good or evil; as being, under that consideration, determined to neither. Thus, for instance, we find it, in the forementioned affections of grief and hatred, taken singly and by themselves; and likewise in fear, anger, despair, and the like; of all which there is none but what may be lawful in the respective actings of each, provided they pitch upon right objects, and proceed in a due manner: for a man may grieve, hate, fear, be angry, and despair of the accomplishment of this or that design, without transgressing any of the rules of morality. So that there may be such things as an honest grief, hatred, fear, anger, and despondency (as we have said), if duly placed and directed; but notwithstanding all this, there can be no such thing in nature as an honest and a lawful envy; but it is intrinsically evil, and imports in it an essential obliquity, not to be taken off or separated from it. For though I have shown that envy was made up of hatred and grief, and

have since also affirmed that these two affections may be good and lawful in their respective actings; yet we are to remember, that this is so only when they act singly, and withal upon due objects; but (when by being combined together, and pitched upon a wrong object, they both make up the passion of envy) they then receive thereby such a different formality and nature, as stamps them absolutely evil, and that so unchangeably such, as no consideration or circumstances whatsoever can possibly render them otherwise; which shows, and proves too, an original necessary disagreeableness between envy and the soul of man: for nothing can agree with this, which consists not with its innocence; and for a man to be envious and innocent too, is contradictory and impossible. And this, by the way, will serve also to demonstrate to us, what affections or passions are natural to the soul of man, and what is unnatural. And thus much for the nature of envy, showing what it is, and wherein it does consist. I proceed now to

II. The second thing proposed, viz. to show *what are the grounds and causes of envy*; and these are twofold.

1. Either on the part of the person envying. Or,

2. On the part of the person envied.

And first for those of the first sort, we may reckon these.

(1.) Great malice and baseness of nature. In which I am forced to use a general word, not being able to give it a particular and more expressive name. But the thing which I mean and design by it, is such a temper of mind as makes men for the most part love mischief for mischief's sake; and though they serve no real interest, and reap no advantage by the hurt they do, yet it is so peculiarly suitable to their ill-nature and constitution to do and to wish it, that the work itself is its own wages and reward. Just as it is observed in some beasts of prey; which having filled their ravenous appetites, so that hunger can prompt them to no further cruelty, yet, out of mere savageness, shall tear and destroy whatsoever they meet with, and take pains to kill, though they leave it presently when they have done.

It is a common saying, that there is no disputing of the reason of facts; forasmuch as each man's particular fancy and humour determine him to like this, and dislike that: and so it is in the pleasures of the mind; some men affect this, and wonder that others hate it; and they on the other side wonder as much, that any one can hate what they so much love. But as philosophy teaches that all wonder springs from an ignorance of the causes of things; so this proceeds from a particular inexperience, and want of observing matters of daily occurrence. In which we shall see many things, of which we can give no clear account or reason, from the common principles of human nature: but they seem to be some of those irregular monstrous productions, which

the general corruption of it preternaturally shoots out into; and which, not keeping the stated course and road of human nature, must not be measured by the usual actings and inclinations of it. Which being so, why should he, whose temper inclines him to be gentle, candid, and beneficial to all who come within his converse, be at all surprised to find another fierce, malicious, and shrewd to every one whom he has to do with; any more than a dove, which feeds upon corn and other seeds, should wonder that a crow or a raven can feed so heartily upon carrion? For every particular temperament has its particular pleasures. And the mind of a Nero will make him hiss, and sing, and play, and enjoy himself as much in beholding the bravest city in the world all in a flame, as others could rejoice at the sight of a triumph, and the glories of a victory.

Now this is the reason that some dispositions do really delight themselves in mischief; and love to see all men about them miserable. It is that *ἐπιχαριεραξία* (as the Greeks call it), that vile quality that makes them laugh at a cross accident, and feast their eyes and their thoughts with the sight of any great calamity: and indeed (morally speaking) they cannot do otherwise. It is meat and drink to them to see others starve; and their own clothes seem then to sit warmest upon them, when they behold others ready to perish with nakedness and cold; like Ætna, never hotter than when surrounded with snow. Now this disposition, this blessed, humane, Christian disposition (to express a thing contrary to nature by words as contrary to itself), is the very groundwork and first foundation-stone of envy.

(2.) The second ground or cause of envy is an unreasonable grasping ambition. For the design of the envious person is not only to obtain, but to engross all honour and greatness to himself. He thinks he can never trade to his advantage, unless he can have the monopoly of every thing he values. Other kinds of ambition indeed will hardly brook any thing above them, but this envious ambition will endure nothing considerable about it. It is remarked of Alexander as a very great fault, and, in truth, of that nature, that one would wonder how it could fall upon so great a spirit; namely, that he would sometimes carp at the valorous achievements of his own captains. *Suæ demptum laudi existimans, quicquid cessisset alienæ*, says the historian: because he thought, that whatsoever praise was bestowed upon another, was taken from him. A great meanness certainly; and enough to make the conqueror himself as much the object of men's pity, as his conquests could be of their envy.

Now this is directly the temper of the envious person, whose ambition is not merely ambition, but an odd compound of ambition and covetousness too; for he would have all to himself, and not so much as a good word must fall beside him; so that whatsoever commendation is given to another, is looked upon as an

invasion of his property, and a reproach to his person: and to do any thing excellent or praiseworthy, is to pass an affront upon him not to be put up. And therefore he bids the whole world, as it were, stand off, while he alone puts himself upon every public performance, catches at every occasion of popularity, and thrusts himself into every man's business; he puffs, and he blows, and he swells, as if the whole world were not enough to afford him elbow-room; for it will not content such a one to be the prime, unless he be also the only man. In a word, he would needs be every thing, did not the same ill quality certainly make him fit for nothing.

But then, if this temper comes also to be backed with interest and power, and the favour of great ones, how grievous and intolerable is it to all persons of modesty and sobriety? What a bluster does it make in all places? Such a one lives in the world like a continual storm, blowing down all before him: and men better than himself must be willing to lie prostrate under his feet and account it an honour, forsooth, to be trampled upon, and made a pedestal only for him to get up by and ride.

But surely it concerns all well-wishers to society to oppose and pursue such a one, as they would a wild boar, for his design is the same, which is to waste, and spoil, and forage all that is about him. Society neither shall nor can be saved by the parts and virtues of others, till such an obstacle to both be stripped of all power, and removed out of the way; who is to the body politic, like an enormous excrescence or great wen to the natural; drawing the proper aliment and juice of all the parts to itself, and so feeding upon and supporting itself by the bane and ruin of the whole. Now this disposition may pass for a second ground of envy.

(3.) Another cause of envy is an inward sense of a man's own weakness and inability to attain what he desires and would aspire to. I do not say that envy universally and always proceeds from hence, or supposes this for the cause of it, but generally and for the most part it does: nor does this carry in it the least contrariety to what I said before, in making ambition one of the causes of envy; for upon a due estimate of the qualities that affect the mind of man, we shall find, that no minds are weaker than the haughty and ambitious; much like the uppermost branches of trees, lofty, but slight, and much more easily broken than those which they overtop.

Now nothing stirs up envy more than a despair of being what the envied person is; and that despair is founded upon a man's consciousness of his not being able to reach the same pitch of perfection: and this consciousness sticks so close to the mind, that for all a man's flattering himself, and his boasting to others, yet he can neither boast nor flatter it away; but that it is a perpetual check to his spirits, and will be sure to keep him under in

the inmost judgment he passes upon himself. Some have observed, that there is no creature whatsoever, but by a kind of natural instinct knows its match; and, no doubt, by consequence its superior and overmatch too. And when a man knows this by an impartial comparison of himself with his rival (the inward apprehensions of the soul being generally impartial and true, what disguise soever they may put on in men's carriage and expressions), upon such a comparison, I say, he sinks and sneaks inwardly; and weighing himself in the balance with the other, quickly sees which scale rises and which falls. Sight and sense are his conviction; and in such cases men seldom or never dissemble with themselves. And this inward intimate sense of a man's own impotence, I affirm to be one ground of envy; and a principal one too. In a word, a man is envious, because his desires are vast and immoderate, and he finds them cramped and stinted by the bounds which nature has put to his abilities. He would fain rise, but he finds something within that pulls him back, and stakes him down; and therefore he casts an evil eye upon others, because he finds such poor entertainment for it in himself.

(4.) The fourth and last cause of envy that I shall assign, is idleness; for this often makes men envy the high offices, honours, and accomplishments of others. They will not be at the pains to fit themselves for preferment, and yet malign those who have it for their fitness, and owe that fitness to their pains. No, they would lie still and be great, sleep or play and be learned. Honours and dignities must come to their bed-side, wait the time of their rising, forsooth, and even court their acceptance. But Nature and Providence has cast the course of things much otherwise; and honour and greatness will wait upon none but such as first wait upon them; which men must not think to do by lazing and sleeping: for as wisdom generally brings men to honour, so study and labour must bring them to wisdom, and the way to be wise is to consult their pillow less. Industry, for the most part, opens the way to preferment, but always to improvement; and it is the sweat of the brow that entitles it to the laurel. And therefore Caius Marius, a person of a plebeian extraction, but one who by his valour and labour had made himself the envy of the Roman nobility, defends himself against them in his speech to the people with great reason. *Invidet* (says he) *honesti meo; ergo invident labori, innocentia, periculis etiam meis, quoniam per hæc illum cepi*. In like manner, one man perhaps envies another's greatness or reputation; but why then does he not also envy his labour, his abstinence, his night-watches, and all his other severities, which were the proper ways and means by which he acquired it. If men would be but true to themselves in employing their parts, their time and opportunities, they would probably have no provocation to envy their

superiors; for this would be the direct way to keep them from having any, and to make them as great and eminent as the greatest. But their idle hours or rather years, their cups and their sports, their gossiping visits and vain courtships, not suffering them to exert those faculties which God and nature had endowed them with, are the only things that keep them low; and being so, they look upon such as ascend, and get into a region above them, like so many black clouds riding over their heads, and by a dark and malign shade always obscuring and eclipsing them; though the true cause of all such eclipses is from men themselves standing in their own light.

But because I have stated envy upon idleness as one cause of it, we ought by all means to note the difference between envy and emulation; which latter is a brave and a noble thing, and quite of another nature, as consisting only in a generous imitation of something excellent; and that such an imitation as scorns to fall short of its copy, but strives, if possible, to outdo it. The emulator is impatient of a superior, not by depressing or maligning another, but by perfecting himself. So that while that sottish thing envy sometimes fills the whole soul, as a great dull fog does the air; this on the contrary inspires it with a new life and vigour, whets and stirs up all the powers of it to action. And surely that which does so (if we also abstract it from those heats and sharpnesses that sometimes by accident may attend it) must needs be in the same degree lawful and laudable too, that it is for a man to make himself as useful and accomplished as he can.

Having thus shown the cause of envy on the part of him that envies, let us in the next place see the causes of it on his part also that is envied. Where in the first place we are to observe, that it is always caused by something either good or great; for no man is envied for his failures, but his perfections. Envy sucks poison out of the fairest and the sweetest flowers, and, like an ill stomach, converts the best nutriment into the worst and rankest humours. So that if we would give in an exact catalogue of all the motives of envy, we must reckon up all the several virtues, ornaments, and perfections, both internal and external, that the nature of man is capable of being ennobled with. But I shall only mention some of the principal: as,

1. Great abilities and endowments of nature. 2. The favour of princes and great persons. 3. Wealth, riches, and prosperity. And, 4. and lastly, a fair credit, esteem, and reputation in the world. And,

1. For the first of these; great natural parts and abilities usually provoke men's envy. God is pleased to send some into the world better furnished and more liberally endowed with the gifts of nature than others, with a quicker apprehension, a further and a deeper reach, and generally a greater fitness for

business and affairs than others; which qualifications, as they set them above the common level of mankind, so they make them to be maligned and struck at by most below them; for let a man stand never so low, he can yet shoot at him that stands higher; much as it is with the lower parts of the world, the earth and the sea, which not being able to vie with the upper and nobler parts of it, the heavens, for brightness, quit scores with them at least by obscuring them with mists and exhalations.

Envy makes a man think another of greater faculties only a continual blemish to himself. He thinks his candle cannot shine in the presence of the other's sun; that is, in truth, he is angry with God for not making him better, and wiser, and stronger. He expostulates the supposed injuries of his creation, and questions his Maker for not coming up to his measures. For while envy spits its venom directly at men, much of it falls obliquely upon God himself; and while it quarrels with the effects of his goodness towards others, does by consequence blaspheme the cause.

So that we see how it strikes both at God and man with the same blow; in which, though God will be sure to maintain his own honour, yet it is seldom in the power of men to secure theirs; many having had but too frequent and sad cause to complain of the very bounties of nature towards them, that it made them too excellent to be safe and happy; so hard is it for any one to keep what another thinks it his interest to take away; according to that man's case, who, while he was rescuing from being drowned, had a ring spied upon his finger, which quickly procured him another death.

2. A second provocative of men's envy is the favour of princes and great persons; which yet, one would think, no envy should presume to control: for the grace of God and the favour of princes are absolute and unaccountable, and so far from being founded upon merit, that for the most part they serve instead of it, and are never more liberal than where they find none at all. Princes claim a sovereignty in their affection, as well as in their office and condition.

Nevertheless envy will be interposing its thwarting, counter-manding power even here also, shutting up the breasts, and tying up the hands of princes; as that they must neither give nor do any thing but by law: and envy must give that law. Whereupon if a prince casts an eye of favour upon any person of worth, and parts, and fitness for public service, if such a one commences favourite one day, envy shall vote him an evil counsellor the next; and then the public good and the rights of the subject run all presently to wreck, till the envious person steps into his place. Merit is an unpardonable piece of popery, with respect to men as well as to God, and to the rewards of this world, as well as of the next.

But if on the other side a prince shall think fit to cast his eye downwards, and by the shine and warmth of his favour draw up some earthly ignoble vapour to the upper region, and there make it glister like a star, envy shall never cease till it brings this down also: and then though it is a pleasure to most eyes to view a star falling, yet none look after it when it is fallen.

So that we see, that whether sovereignty would serve itself by preferring men of sufficiency, or divert and sport itself by advancing men of none, envy equally protests, and plants its engines against both; neither allowing sovereign rulers (who yet are men, and sometimes not without the infirmities of men) meet helps and ministers to govern by, nor so much as an illustrious simpleton sometimes to refresh themselves with; which is very hard and severe usage certainly, especially since it has been always looked upon as one of the most allowed uncontested royalties of princes, to make their will the sole rule and reason of their kindness, to dispense their benefactions as they please, and, in a word, to be as free and arbitrary as fortune herself, by bestowing their favours upon such as she usually bestows hers; not the wisest always in the world.

3. A third ground or motive of envy is from the wealth, riches, or plenty of another. No man willingly would be poor, and no envious person would have another rich; every one who is remarkably so, being commonly looked upon but as a kind of injury to all the poor ones about him: not that he does or ever did them any injury, but that by being rich, he is reckoned one himself. For whosoever has a great deal to lay up, will be always an intolerable grievance to him who has nothing to spend; and to look upon a full bag, and to have nothing to do with it, is no small mortification to such a one. The learned Verulam observes, that diseases arising from emptiness, are generally the most dangerous, and the most hardly cured; and amongst the diseases of the mind, envy, grounded upon domestic penury, is certainly of the same nature; especially where a neighbouring opulence shows what the remedy is, but not how it may be had; like the thirst of Tantalus, where the thing thirsted for was near enough, and yet out of reach too. And in such a case envy will be sure to work and boil up to a more than ordinary height, while the envious person frets and raves, and swells at the plenties and affluence of his abounding neighbour, and, as I may so express it, is even ready to burst with another's fulness.

What made the devil (the grand exemplar of envy) so much malign Job, but the bounties of Providence to him in a large estate, great revenues, and a flourishing family; and all of them watched over and guarded by the wakeful eye and the powerful hand of him who gave them? And no doubt the Sabeans and Chaldeans, with the rest of his good neighbours (who did such terrible execution upon all that belonged to him), were acted and

led on by the same spirit. They could not brook the splendour and greatness of so potent, and (as they thought) overgrown a neighbour. He was an eyesore to them upon the throne, but (for all his noisome ulcers) none at all when they saw him upon the dunghill.

What made that wretch Ziba accuse his lord and master to David, a judge after Ziba's own heart? The accusation indeed charged treason upon Mephibosheth; but whatsoever the treason was, it was only his land which was the traitor. For when his envious accuser had once swallowed that, the accusation was at an end presently; and poor Mephibosheth quickly became innocent Mephibosheth.

In fine, if the envious person be poor and beggarly, he would have all about him as arrant beggars as himself; but if rich, he would have all beggars but himself; like Gideon's fleece, filled with the dew of heaven, and every thing else dry about it: so that wheresoever you see any one of a plentiful fortune and large possessions, you are not at all to wonder if you also see such a one maligned, envied, and pursued with all imaginable spite and rancour, by some pitiful malcontent or other, who perhaps could never call so much land his own as might serve to bury him when dead, and much less suffice to maintain him while alive. And it is too well known to all the world, not to be justly detested by it, that there is a certain profession of men, who shall never cease to be maligned and persecuted, while there is any thing of revenue either to support the dignity of their function, or procure a common respect to their persons; but they shall be followed with all the odious, false, and base imputations of pride, covetousness, and luxury, still rattling about their ears, and whatsoever else the envy of a raging avarice and a domineering insolence can belch out against them. But after all, I would gladly learn, wherein this monstrous pride and covetousness of the church shows itself. Why, in this, that the ministers of it are not yet clothed in rags or sackcloth, that the church itself is neither for naked gospels* nor naked evangelists, and that her poor clergy can just (or very hardly) find enough to pay taxes and other public duties, and yet make a shift to keep themselves from quite starving or begging afterwards. This, this is the pride and covetousness of our clergy. And then, lastly, for their luxury, that will be found (if at all) in their not being willing to lick the crumbs at the end of their rich neighbour's table, and much less under it; that they scorn to sneak here and there for a dinner, or to beg their daily bread of any one, but of God himself.

This, I say, is the real and true account of all these loud and

* See a vile book so entitled and reflecting upon the clergy, though (to the shame of the author) written by a clergyman.

impudent clamours made by envy and atheism, popery and puritanism, against the English clergy. And the truth is, that as long as that small remainder of land belonging to the church shall continue yet untorn from her, and as long as there shall be those about her (as there will ever be very many) who will never think that they themselves have enough, the church and clergy of England shall always be inveighed against and struck at, as having too much.

But fourthly, the fourth and last grand motive and ground of envy that I shall mention is, a man's having a fair reputation and name in the world; a thing upon which envy has always a cross and malign aspect: though surely nothing in nature can be imagined less liable to any rational exception, than for a man of merit to be praised and commended, that is, to have a few good words sprinkled upon him without offence to any one; and that fame, which is nothing but air and voice, should not be able to raise such storms in any breast whatsoever. But experience has declared it much otherwise, and that some men can hear the applauses of none but themselves, but with the utmost indignation and impatience; nay, so boundless and unreasonable are they, that they would even engross the vogue of the whole world, and confine the very popular breath, and unlimited, boundless freedom of men's tongues to their own persons. Such a one, perhaps, is hated by his neighbour to the very death. And what, I pray, may be his fault? Why, he is generally well spoken of, the world gives him the character of a virtuous, a just, or a discreet person; and this the envious wretch thinks casts a dark shadow upon himself, who never reckons himself so fine, as when he plumes and decks himself with the spoils of his brother's reputation, and can refresh his base mind in all companies with malicious reproachful stories of him; often repeating and improving what the malice of report has brought to him to be commented and enlarged upon by his own more malicious invention. Nay that the very worth and virtue which deservedly draws after it the highest panegyrics from some, often proves matter of the bitterest satires from others; a very odd and strange thing, I confess; but envy will easily unriddle the strangeness, and take off the wonder. The due consideration of all which has founded the truth of a saying much more significant, I own, than believed, and more believed than practised; namely, that he of all men lives the safest who lies the closest; and that none are so much out of the reach of the world as those who are most out of the view of it too. For what is every step into the public, but a further advance into danger? an engaging in fresh troubles and contentions, and a drawing after one those eyes, which, like the basilisk, kill whatsoever they look upon, if but capable of worth enough to be looked to death by them? It is not safe for any one to be much

commended, to be borne upon the wings of fame, and ride in triumph upon the tongues of men; for the tongues of some do but provoke the teeth of more; and men, we know, do much more heartily detract than they use to commend. And thus I have shown four of the chief motives of envy; for I never pretended to recount or rip them all up: but yet if I should endeavour to make such an attempt, and to comprise them all in one general representation, I think I might very properly give it you in this one word; that every thing will make a man to be envied, which shall set him above being pitied.

III. I come now to the third general head proposed for the handling of the words; which is, to show *the effects and consequences of envy*, expressed by "confusion, and every evil work."

The proper and grand effect then of envy, we see, is confusion; and this also is twofold, upon the account of a twofold relation. 1. To the envious man himself. And, 2. To those who are envied and maligned by him. And,

First of all, this ill quality brings confusion and calamity upon the envious person himself, who cherishes and entertains it; and, like the viper, gnaws out the bowels which first conceived it. It is indeed the only act of justice that it does, that the guilt it brings upon a man it revenges upon him too, and so torments and punishes him much more than it can afflict or annoy the person who is envied by him. We know what the poet says of envy; and it is with the strictest truth, without the least hyperbole, that Phalaris's brazen bull, and all the arts of torment invented by the greatest masters of them, the Sicilian tyrants, were not comparable to those that the tyranny of envy racks the mind of man with. For it ferments and boils in the soul, putting all the powers of it into the most restless and disorderly agitation. It lies at the heart like a worm, always gnawing and corroding, and piercing it with a secret invisible sting and poison; it even changes the way of man's ordinary conversation, sours his behaviour, sharpens and envenoms his discourse, and very often proceeds so far as to leave its marks upon his very countenance, and the habit of his body, making that pale and pining, of a ghastly look and a declining constitution; the livery which is heretofore bestowed upon Brutus and Cassius, a livery every way suited to the worthy service it had engaged those wretches in. And now does not this remarkably show the peculiar unreasonableness and sottishness of this vice? For there are few other vices but prevail upon men upon the account of some supposed pleasure, as that they afford some short gratification to their sensuality, or at least bring with them something of profit or emolument; but he who will be envious, can design nothing but to make himself miserable, because he sees another happy: he must resolve to be dejected and cast down, whensoever he

sees his neighbour prosperous, and, as the poet describes envy, "ready to weep for this very cause, that she could see nothing to be wept at:" *Vixque tenet lacrymas, quia nil lacrymabile cernit.* We need not seek for arguments to dissuade a man from being envious upon the score of charity to his neighbour, but even of love and mercy to himself. Let him but be prevailed upon not to be his own tormentor, his own executioner, and his envy will be at an end. Let not his neighbour's rest break his sleep. Let not his friend's fortune or reputation make him out of love with himself, and neglect his own. For why may I not come in as a sharer instead of being a maligner of his joy and felicity? Forasmuch as there is a real pleasure in the congratulation of another's good; the very society of joy redoubling it: so that while it lights directly upon my friend, it rebounds upon myself; and the brighter his candle burns, the more easily will it light mine. Whenssoever the Romans conquered an enemy, it was indeed the general himself only who was said to triumph, but the whole army and all the people equally rejoiced. But the envious person will bear no part in the festivals of a public mirth: he shuts himself up and snarls, while others laugh and sing. And if all the world were of this temper, it would be a useless (which yet has ever been accounted the noblest) property of good, that it naturally spreads and diffuses itself abroad. And therefore I shall say no more of such a person but this; that he who maligns and envies others, is, of all men living, least to be envied himself.

In the next place, we are to consider the effects of envy, in respect of the object of it, or the persons envied; and these may be reduced to the following three.

1. A busy, curious inquiry, or prying into all the concerns of the person envied and maligned; and this, no doubt, only as a step or preparative to those further mischiefs, which envy assuredly drives at. For most certain it is, that no man inquires into another man's concerns, or makes it his business to acquaint himself with his privacies, but with a design to do him some shrewd turn or other. Such an eye is never idle, but always looking about to see where a man lies open to a blow, and accordingly to direct the hand to take a sure stroke. It is withal an indefatigable teller and hearer of base stories. It is said of the priests and scribes (who bore so cruel an envy to our Saviour for the acceptance he found amongst the people), that they were almost continually sending forth spies, that they might catch him in his words, Luke xx. 20. And it is this blessed quality, forsooth, that so insinuates into families, that puts them upon hiring servants to betray their masters, and inveigling one friend, if possibly they can, to supplant another: it is this, that listens at doors and windows, that catches at every breath or whisper that is stirring; so that it will concern the person envied to

be still upon his strictest guard, having an enemy so constantly upon the watch. Watching, for the most part, imports hostility; and no man observes the motions of his enemy, but that he may more advantageously find a time to fight him. The eagle is a very sagacious bird, but a very devouring one too; and the quickness of its sight is only in order to the better seizing of its prey.

2. The second effect of envy with reference to the envied person, is calumny or detraction. We have already seen the first effort made by it against him, by an insidious diving into his most reserved and secret affairs, and the next to this always works out at the mouth; so that if a man cannot rival and overbear his neighbour by downright violence of action, he will attempt it at least by slander, and vilifying expressions; and that there may not want art as well as malice, to carry on the attack more sure and home. Has a man done bravely, and got himself a reputation too great to be borne down by any base and direct aspersions? Why then envy will seemingly subscribe to the general vogue in many or most things; but then it will be sure to come over him again with a sly oblique stroke in some derogating *but* or other, and so slide in some scurvy exception, which shall effectually stain all his other virtues; and like the dead fly in the apothecary's ointment, which (Solomon tells us) never fails to give the whole an offensive savour. And, peradventure, to weave the dissimulation with yet a finer thread, and so to make it the more artificial and less discernible, the disgrace shall be insinuated and cast in with words of pity. As after a man has been commended in company for several good qualities and perfections, the sneaking envious wretch shall then put in, and seem to assent to every thing so spoken of him; but shall add withal, what an unhappiness is it, that a person endued with such accomplishments should be so unluckily surprised, as to be guilty of such or such actions; and that there should be any thing to allay or blemish the clearness of his reputation; when perhaps the rest of the company were wholly ignorant of any such matter, had not his malicious ill-favoured pity brought it fresh into remembrance. This is the way which envy takes to undermine a man's honour, when the universal vogue of men is on his side, and so makes art and caution necessary to support and fix the slander. But if a man be quite unknown, and his virtue has lain private and obscure, envy will then prevent, and be beforehand with such a one, loading him with direct, impudent, and downright lies, and represent him as vile and infamous, as it would have him thought by all. So that when he shall appear and step forth into the world, he shall find it prepossessed, and a mighty prejudice against him for him to break through and conquer; a prejudice sown and cherished in men's minds by a long, a diligent, and a malicious detraction. In which case, if it so

falls out, as oftentimes it does, that what an envious tongue reports, a credulous ear drinks in and believes; but withal conceals and hides from the injured defamed person, and thereby deprives him from all power to clear and vindicate himself: it is evident and unavoidable, that, so far as the malice of one and the greatness of the other can blast him, he must of necessity be ruined; as being for the present utterly destitute of all other relief, but the consciousness of his own innocence, and a reliance upon that Providence, which alone is able to bring light out of darkness, and in its own good time, to make an injured and abused innocence, in spite of all the conjunctions of envy and power, clear and victorious.

3. The last and grand effect of envy, in respect of the person envied, is his utter ruin and destruction; for nothing less was intended from the very first, whatsoever comes to be effected in the issue. Its methods of destroying are indeed various; sometimes it assaults a man with open violence; sometimes it smites him secretly; sometimes it flies in his face; and sometimes it reaches him more spitefully with some backstroke; and so, like the worst of cowards, comes behind him and runs him through. For, as I said before, nothing can satisfy envy, but a man's utter confusion, and (if it were possible) his very annihilation. It is not content only to asperse or defame a man, nor regards his mere infamy otherwise than as it is an instrument of his absolute and total ruin. No, it would see him begging at a grate, drawn upon a hurdle, and at length dying upon a gibbet. It would make him odious to his friends, and despised by his enemies. Nothing under death clothed with all the circumstances of misery and disaster that human nature is capable of, can assuage the rage and fury of envy, which in all its persecutions of a man is as "cruel as death, and as insatiable as the grave." What says the wise man of it, Prov. xxvii. 4, "Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?"

It hunts and pursues a man without remorse or pity, and never rests nor gives him over till it has sucked his blood, and drawn out his very breath and soul together. Nor does it stop here, or expire with the bare life of the envied person, but it tramples even upon his ashes also, lashes and tears his surviving memory, and possibly wreaks itself likewise upon his posterity. So that the child, as heir apparent, shall inherit all the calamities, succeed into all the enormities and disgusts, that worried the father while living; they shall, I say, all of them be charged upon the son's person, as debts are upon his estate. And lastly, envy has a peculiar malignity in it, that the grudges arising from it admit of no reconciliation. There is no buying a man's peace with an envious person: but the burnings of such a hatred are like those of hell, intolerable and perpetual. For the

truth is, all sort of reconciliation, in the very nature of the thing, supposes a deprecation of, or a satisfaction for some injury, which first caused a breach between the persons thus to be reconciled. But envy grounds not itself upon any injury offered or done it by any man; it has no provocation but its neighbour's virtue or felicity; crimes never pardoned by envy, wheresoever in any topping degree it finds them.

And thus having given some account of this vile and accursed quality, and that both as to its nature and consequences; and likewise both in respect of him who envies another, as likewise of him also who is envied by him; come we now to the

IV. Fourth and last thing proposed for the handling of the words, and that was, *to make some use and improvement of the subject* hitherto treated of by us; and what better and more important use can we make of it, than to convince and remind us of these following things?

1. First, of the extreme vanity of even the most excellent and best esteemed enjoyments of this world. How do riches and honour, wit and beauty, strength and learning, shine and glisten in the eyes of most men! and no doubt, but as all of them are the gifts, so are they also the blessings of God to those who can make a wise and sanctified use of them. But such is our unhappiness in this vale of weakness and mortality, that like Jonah's gourd, no sooner do these things shoot out and flourish about us, and we begin to delight and please ourselves under the shadow of them, but God quickly provides a worm, even that killing one of envy, to smite the root of them, and then presently they decline, wither, and die over our heads. Shadows do not more naturally attend shining bodies, than envy pursues worth and merit, always close at the very heels of them, and like a sharp blighting east wind, still blasting and killing the noblest and most promising productions of virtue in their earliest bud; and, as Jacob did Esau, supplants them in their very birth. For what made Saul so implacably persecute David? Was it not the greatness of his valour, and the glory of his actions, which drew after them the applause of the whole kingdom, and consequently the envy of the king himself? How comes history to tell us of so many assassinations of princes, downfalls of favourites, underminings and poisonings of great persons? Why, in all or most of these sad events, still only worth has been the crime, and envy the executioner. What drew the blood of Cæsar, banished Cicero, and put out the eyes of the brave and victorious Belisarius, but a merit too great for an emperor to reward, and for envy to endure? And what happiness can there be in such things, as only make the owners of them fall a woful sacrifice to the base suspicions and cruelties of some wicked and ungrateful great ones; but always worse than they are or can

be great? He indeed who is actually possessed of these glorious endowments, thinks them both his ornament and defence; and so does the man think the sword he wears, though the point of it may be sometimes turned upon his own breast; and it is not unheard of, for a man to die by that very weapon which he reckoned he should defend and preserve his life by.

2. This may convince us of the safety of the lowest, and the happiness of a middle condition. Take the poorest wretch who begs his bread from door to door, yet he does not this in the fear of that life which he begs for the support of: for that he accounts safe, and thinks he needs no watch to guard it against the motions or designs of any potent adversary, but walks unconcernedly, and sleeps securely; for his poverty is his guard, and his rags his armour. No poisons or daggers are prepared in hospitals: these are entertainments which envy treats men with in courts and palaces. Only power and greatness are prize for envy; whose evil eye always looks upwards, and whose hand scorns to strike where it can place its foot. Life and a bare competence are a quarry too low for so stately a vice as envy to fly at. And therefore men of a middle condition are indeed doubly happy. First, that, with the poor, they are not the objects of pity; nor, 2, with the rich and great, the mark of envy. "Give me neither poverty nor riches," said Agar: and it is a question whether the piety or prudence of that prayer were greater. The honest country gentleman, and the thriving tradesman, or country farmer, have all the real benefits of nature, and the blessings of plenty, that the highest and richest grandees can pretend to; and, which is more, all these without the tormenting fears and jealousies of being rivalled in their prince's favour, or supplanted at court, or tumbled down from their high and beloved stations. All those storms fly over their heads, and break upon the towering mountains and lofty cedars; they have no ill-got places to lose; they are neither libelled nor undermined, but, without invading any man's right, they sit safe and warm in a moderate fortune of their own, and free from all that grandeur and magnificence of misery, which is sure to attend an invidious greatness. And he who is not contented with such a condition, must seek his happiness (if ever he have any) in another world, for Providence itself can provide no better for him in this.

3. And lastly, we learn from hence the necessity of a man's depending upon something without him, higher and stronger than himself, even for the preservation of his ordinary concerns in this life. Nothing can be a greater argument to make a man fly, and cast himself into the arms of Providence, than a due consideration of the nature and the workings of envy. For how fierce and cruel, how watchful and diligent, how remorseless and implacable, and, which is worst of all, how causeless for the most part, and how unprovoked is this vile thing in all its assaults

upon its neighbour; not acting upon any injury or motive from without, but boiling over upon all about it, through an overflowing fulness of malice from within?

The greatest strength which God has vouchsafed men, to secure themselves by in this world, are innocence and wisdom; and yet both of them together are not always an equal match for envy. Thou perhaps art busied in the honest employments of thy estate or calling, neither doing nor thinking hurt to any one; but in the meantime envy may chance to be much busier than thou, dropping poison into the ears of thy prince or patron, and so dashing thy innocent name and fortune with such a killing whisper, as shall strip thee of all in a moment, before thou shalt know either the tongue that hurt thee, or the hand that smote thee. Hast thou a large estate? so had Naboth; yet envy quickly found a Jezebel to alter the title, and dispossess the true owner of his rich vineyard. Hast thou friends in the world? their minds may change, and their friendship fail thee, when the envy of two or three back friends shall be continually stabbing and pecking at their good opinion of thee, till at length they strike thee through and through, and so pierce thy heart before it ever reaches thy ear. And lastly, hast thou a fair reputation and name in the world? know that it is but as glass, the foul breath of envy can quickly sully, and the least touch of the hand easily break it. For it is God only who must watch over thy good name, and protect thy reputation. For envy will be awake against it when thou art asleep, and still present to asperse thee when thou art absent, and so not able to vindicate or speak one word for thyself. And therefore none but that great "keeper of Israel, who neither slumbers nor sleeps," and whose omnipresence makes him actually present in all places, can preserve thee in this great concern. It is he, I say, who must keep thee "secretly in his pavilion from the strife of tongues," control their virulence, and rebuke the foul and restless spirit of slander and detraction. For otherwise, he who reckons himself out of the reach and power of envy, by any pitch of greatness or goodness whatsoever, is like that man whom Solomon represents "lying down to sleep upon the top of a mast," and never considers either the winds and storms roaring about him, or the cruel devouring deep gaping under him; a very unsecure place certainly to sleep in, though never so high.

Nor has that man pitched upon a safer dormitory, who thinks to rest quietly over a much more merciless element, and more dangerous a deep of the two (as we have proved envy to be) unless the man's sense and reason should have first left him, and fallen fast asleep before. In a word, what mortal can stand his ground against this irresistible engine of all mischief? Even the wisest have perished by its wiles, and the most innocent been taken by its snares; the noblest, and most valiant; the ablest

ministers of state, and most renowned commanders in war; nay, even kings themselves have sometimes fallen before it; so impossible is it for any thing in nature to be sure of protection against it; but that man only, who, under the cover of an almighty wing, has made the King of kings his refuge, and the God of gods his everlasting habitation.

To whom therefore be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON XXVII.

CHRIST'S PROMISE THE SUPPORT OF HIS DESPISED MINISTERS.

[Preached at Christ Church, Oxon, on the 30th of April, 1668, being Ascension-day.]

LUKE XXI. 15.

For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

It being the great design of our Saviour's coming into the world to declare and prove himself the Messiah, and to establish a church upon that belief; we have him here encouraging the ministers of it with this notable promise, left them as a kind of legacy not long before his death; together with a prediction of what should befall them after it: which was so dreadful and discouraging, that nothing but such a promise could support them against the terrors of such a prediction. And therefore as a tender master, all made up of goodness and compassion, while he delivers them this bitter cup with one hand, he reaches them as great a cordial with the other; all that he here promised or said to them, being but a pledge of what he would more abundantly do for them after his ascension; when having finished his dolorous course here, and triumphantly sat down at the right hand of his Father, his glorious employment ever after should be, as a king to make good, what as a prophet he had foretold. And this he did with so exact a conformity of his actions to his words, that no instance can be given, through all the records of time, where there is so perfect and punctual a correspondence between past and present, as we see and find in the predictions and promises of our Saviour in his life, and the completion of them since his death. A most clear and full proof doubtless of his doctrine, and consequently as infallible a demonstration of the divinity of his person, and the authentic truth of his commission.

In the words we have these two things considerable.

I. Something implied by way of prediction, viz. that the apostles should be sure to meet with adversaries, who would both gainsay and resist them in the discharge of their apostolic function.

II. Something declared by way of promise, viz. that they should find such succour and assistance from their Lord and Master, after the resumption of his glory, as should make and overcome all this opposition.

Which two heads comprehend all that is in the text, and accordingly I shall give some brief account of both. And,

1. For the first of these, *the prediction* here implied, viz. that the apostles should not fail of adversaries to oppose them. This, indeed, was to be no small argument of their apostolic mission, though by no means to be reckoned amongst miracles, it being so far from having any thing of miracle or wonder in it, that nothing can be more frequent, usual, and indeed fashionable, than for the generality of men to malign a preacher, and persecute an apostle. For such as engage themselves in the service of that grating, displeasing thing to the world, called *truth*, must expect the natural issue and consequent of truth, which is a mortal hatred of those who speak it. The Christian ministry is a troublesome and a disgusted institution, and as little regarded by men as they regard their souls, but rather hated as much as they love their sins. The church is every one's prey, and the shepherds are pilled, and polled, and fleeced by none more than by their own flocks. A prophet is sure to be without honour, not only in his own country, but almost in every one else. I scarce ever knew any ecclesiastic but was treated with scorn and distance; and the only peculiar respect I have observed shown such persons in this nation (which yet I dare say they could willingly enough dispense with) is, that sometimes a clergyman of a hundred pounds a year has the honour to be taxed equal to a layman of ten thousand. Even those who pretend most respect to the church and churchmen, will yet be found rather to use than to respect them: and if at any time they do ought for them, or give any thing to them, it is not because they are really lovers of the church, but to serve some turn by being thought so. As some keep chaplains, not out of any concern for religion, but as it is a piece of grandeur something above keeping a coach; it looks creditable and great in the eyes of the world: though in such cases he who serves at the altar, has generally as much contempt and disdain passed upon him, as he who serves in the kitchen, though perhaps not in the same way; if any regard be had to him, it is commonly such a one as men have for a garment (or rather a pair of shoes) which fits them, viz. to wear him and wear him, till he is worn out, and then to lay him aside. For be the grandee he depends upon never so powerful, he must not expect that he will do any thing for him till it is scandalous not to do it. If a first or second-rate living chance to fall in his gift, let not the poor domestic think either learning, or piety, or long service, a sufficient pretence to it; but let him consider with himself rather, whether he can answer that difficult question, Who was Melchisedek's father?* or whether instead of grace

* A question very hardly solvable by a poor clergyman, though never so good a divine.

for grace he can bring gift for gift, for all other qualifications without it will be found empty and insignificant.

In short, every thing is thought too much for persons of this profession. Though one would think, that as they are men, and men who have been at the charge of an expensive and laborious education, as much or more than most others, they ought upon the very right of nature and justice to expect a return, in some degree, at least, proportionable to such cost and labour, as well as men of any other profession whatsoever: yet here it seems religion must supersede the rule of justice and the course of nature: and the ministers of it must be required to live not only as spiritual persons, but as spirits: that is, without those common accommodations of life, which God and nature have made necessary to all who are yet in the body, freely to reach out to the whole race of mankind; and upon no other ground in the world it is, but men's envying the church a competent share of these, that all those virulent, but senseless clamours of the pride, covetousness, and luxury of the clergy have been raised: so that when their insolent domineering enemies cannot get them under their feet, as they desire, then presently the clergy are too high and proud. And when avarice disposes men to be rapacious and sacrilegious, then forthwith the church is too rich. And lastly, when with whoring, and gaming, and revelling, they have disabled themselves from paying their butchers, their brewers, and their vintners, then immediately they are all thunder and lightning against the intemperance and luxury of the clergy, forsooth, and high time it is for a thorough reformation.

But to disabuse the world, and to answer the several branches of the imputation; the true account of the pride of the clergy is, that they are able to clothe themselves with something better than rags; or rather, that they have any thing to clothe them at all, and that the church of England would (by its good will) neither have naked gospels nor naked evangelists. And then in the next place, the covetousness of the clergy is, that they can and do find wherewithal to pay taxes, and just enough to keep them from begging afterwards. And lastly, their luxury and intemperance lies in this, that they had rather eat at their own poor home, than lick up the crumbs at the end of their haughty neighbour's table, and much less under it; that they scorn to sneak here and there for a dinner, or beg their daily bread of any but of God himself. The world in the mean time proceeding by no other measure with the clergy than this, viz. to exact of them hospitality to others, and to grudge them bread for themselves. And this is the true account of the pride, covetousness, and luxury of the clergy, which by the mouths of puritans and republicans have made such a noise in these deluded kingdoms.

But it is the church's lot to be defamed, libelled, and persecuted on all hands; and may our blessed Lord, who found the

same usage before us, give us grace and courage to bear it; even I myself have heard it said, and that with no ordinary acceptance and pleasure to the rest of the company who heard it, that a divine was to be spit upon by his place. And be it so, since it must be so. Nevertheless it is the comfort of such, that Christ was spit upon before them, though he had not indeed the honour to be spit upon by Christians: in which respect it must be confessed, that the servants are preferred before their master. And I have heard it said also, that the church and clergy of England have an interest opposite to the rest of the nation; that is, in other words, that the whole nation ought to rise up (as one man) against them with staves and clubs, and knock out their brains, as vermin and public nuisances; and withal, that there ought to be no church or clergy for the future, if the nation will but mind its own interest. This is the proper sense and interpretation of these words; and I hope all the impartial world (which bear and deserve the name of Christians) will consider and remember them.

Nevertheless to dispute this point a little, I would fain know how the English clergy come to have an interest opposite to the English nation; for we are both English men, and the sons of English men (till of late at least), and own no dependence upon any foreign power, as the papists do, and consequently have a claim to a support and maintenance from our country, while we serve it in a profession useful to the exigencies of it. And whether those whose profession obliges them to be still pressing obedience upon their fellow-subjects to their sovereign, and just and amicable dealing with one another, together with a universal regulation of men's manners, serve the public by a profession useful to the exigencies thereof, we appeal to the public and to all men of sense and conscience to judge. But if because the clergy will never attempt, by cheating and pimping, to raise themselves from beggary to great estates and high stations, and have not forty, or fifty, or perhaps a hundred thousand pounds ready at every hand for a purchase, they must therefore have an interest opposite to the rest of the nation: this opposition, for ought I see, is like to continue as long as the honesty and poverty of the clergy (for the most part accompanying it) is like to do. But whether those who avow such implacable enmity against the ministry, will be able to preserve this, or any other government, so much as one poor minute from the ruin which their own detestable lives, principles, and vices threaten it with, is very much to be questioned; or rather indeed it is past all question, that they tend directly, and operate strongly, towards its utter ruin and destruction.

Upon the whole matter, if we consider the treatment of the clergy in these nations, since popery was driven out, both as to the language and usage which they find from most about them,

I do, from all that I have read, heard, or seen, confidently aver (and I wish I could speak it loud enough to reach all the corners and quarters of the whole world) that there is no nation or people under heaven, Christian or not Christian, which despise, hate, and trample upon their clergy or priesthood comparably to the English. So that (as matters have been carried) it is really no small argument of the predominance of conscience over interest, that there are yet parents who can be willing to breed up any of their sons (if hopefully endowed) to so discouraged and discouraging a profession.

We see then, according to the prediction in the text, how, from the apostolic age, down all along to the present, the ministers of Christ were sure to meet with enemies; and that, whether they were professedly such, or pretendedly friends, their enmity was still the same, and perhaps much more fatal in the effects of it, acting under this latter guise than under the former; as the thief never does his business so effectually as when he robs under a vizard. After which, the next thing offering itself to our consideration, is, how this enmity (especially in the apostle's time, which the words chiefly point at) was to exert itself, and that the text tells us was to be two ways, viz. by word and deed; by gainsaying and resisting; and these two certainly could not but afford scope and compass enough for all the malice of man to employ and spend itself in.

And accordingly we will speak distinctly of both of them. And,

1. For gainsaying; the word in the Greek is ἀντιπειν, importing opposition in disputation, with an endeavour to refel or confute what is alleged by another: and the design of it is re-dargution; called by Aristotle ἐλεγχος or ἐλέγχειν; that is, a concluding of something contradictory to the proposition asserted. And thus we find the apostles frequently and fiercely encountered by adversaries of very different persuasions, by Jews and Gentiles, and the several sects belonging to both. As for our Saviour himself, who led the way, and was first engaged in such conflicts, we know the constant issue of all the disputes the Jews had with him was, that he silenced them by an absolute confutation. So that the end of all these contests was, that "they durst not ask him any more questions;" showing hereby so much discretion, at least, as to know when they were baffled, and to say no more. And this mighty force in arguing he was pleased to transmit to his apostles after him, as it was highly requisite that he should. Whereupon we see how Peter and John (as illiterate as they were) nonplussed the whole council of the priests and elders, giving such an edge to the truth they spoke, that the text tells us "it cut them to the heart," Acts v. And in the next place we read how St. Stephen confounded the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, to-

gether with them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with him; so that the text remarkably notes, that they were not able to withstand the "wisdom and spirit by which he spake," Acts vi. 10. Truth, it seems, with that one single weapon of wisdom to defend it, being an overmatch to never so many tongues opposing it. Likewise we find how Apollos triumphed over his Jewish opponents, mightily convincing them "that Jesus was Christ," Acts xviii. 28. And the same overpowering spirit we find conjuring down Elymas the sorcerer, opposing St. Paul's doctrine, Acts xiii. 8, 9, &c. The like opposition also the same apostle complains of from Alexander the copper-smith, greatly withstanding the gospel taught by him, 1 Tim. iv. 14. And it was well the copper-smith did not out of spite turn preacher, and so disgrace it more.

But this gainsaying humour stopped not in the doctrine preached, but overflowed and worked over also upon the preachers themselves; and that in calumnies and slanders of all sorts; sometimes reproaching them as drunkards, in Acts ii. 13, and thereby showing us, that the charge of intemperance upon the clergy was as early as the apostles, who had a liberal share of it; and not only so, but it began even upon Christ himself, who was taxed for a glutton and a wine-bibber long before them: though, methinks, it looks something odd and unaccountable, that those should make the lame walk, and restore to others the use of their legs, who had drunk themselves off their own. They were traduced also as public incendiaries, and such as "turned the world upside down," Acts xvii. 6; which yet (as the world then stood, with idolatry at the head of it, and truth under foot) was perhaps the only way to restore it to its right posture. They were also jeered and flouted at, as fools and babblers, Acts xvii. 18. But why then did not those profound rabbies amongst the Jews, and the Stoics and Epicureans (those oracles of reason) amongst the philosophers, baffle and refel these babblers, and so dashing their absurd doctrine in its first rise, prevent its spreading by a mature and thorough confutation? But it was ever an easier work to contradict than to confute. From reproaching them as fools, they proceeded to represent them also as madmen, Acts xxvi. 24; 2 Cor. v. 13. Though this, I confess, seems not so much a wonder to me, since I doubt not but the clergy in all ages (if but well beneficed) would be accused for lunatics, if for so doing their accusers might be their guardians. But since it would be endless to traverse all particulars, let it suffice us to have observed, that as in the forecited Acts xvii. 32; we find the Athenians mocking; and in Acts xviii. 6, the Jews opposing themselves and blaspheming: so let us take the sum total of all from that one place in Acts xxviii. 22: "As for this sect, we know that it is every where spoken against." In fine, the apostles and ministers of Christ were looked upon as the very offals

and offscouring of the world, and were trampled upon accordingly. They were scarce ever mentioned but with slander; or so much as spoken to, but with sarcasm and invective. They were perpetually railed at as deceivers and impostors, even while they were endeavouring to undeceive the world from those wretched impostures and delusions which had so long and so miserably bewitched it: in a word, they were like physicians exchanging cures for curses; and reviled and abused by their froward patients, while they were doing all they could for their health and recovery. But,

2. The other branch of the opposition designed against the apostles and ministers of Christ is expressed by *resisting*; a word importing a much more substantial kind of enmity than that which only spends at the mouth, and shows itself in froth and noise; an enmity, which, instead of scoffs and verbal assaults, should encounter them with all that art could contrive or violence execute; with whips and scourges, cross and gibbet, swords and axes; and though bare words draw no blood, yet these, to be sure, would. And such were the weapons with which they were to act their butcheries upon the Christians; till at length, through all the sorts and degrees of cruelty, the same martyrdom should both crown and conclude their sufferings together. Nor were these persecutions more terrible for their sharpness, than for their frequency, and sometimes their continuance also: ten persecutions in the space of the first three centuries, and the last of them of ten years' duration. They came so fast upon the Christians, that all the intermission they had from one persecution, was but a kind of pause or breathing-time (a short parenthesis of ease) to enable them for another. So that notwithstanding those short intervals, it was really and indeed a persecution still; and the work went on, though the workmen might sometimes sleep or stand still a little, to gather more strength. For the persecuting spirit seemed to shake the primitive church like a mighty ague; and it held it for a long time; the disease continuing, when the fits were gone off. This was the miserable condition which Christianity was then in; the whole world rising up in arms, and combining in a common association against the professors and preachers of it; a forlorn company (God knows) of helpless, defenceless men, without any thing but truth and innocence to stand by them: idolatry in the mean while sitting in the thrones of emperors, marching in the head of armies, and commanding the joint assistance of all that was worldly, wise, or mighty, to secure it in the possession of the so long captivated and deluded universe. So that no wonder, armed with all this power, persecution raged with a vengeance. And yet by all the terrible massacres and executions done by it, it neither did nor could prevail. Forasmuch as that which kills the person does not therefore destroy the cause, especially a cause designed to

teach sufferings, to be carried on by suffering, and lastly to conquer and command the world by suffering. In a word, a religion founded in the cross (as that of Christianity eminently was) could not surely be extinguished or suppressed by it.

But some may possibly here object and say, that all that has been hitherto spoken by us, of this gainsaying and resisting the apostles, seems a direct contradiction to the text, which positively affirms, that "their adversaries should not be able to gainsay or resist them." But this difficulty is small, or rather indeed none at all, and consequently the solution very easy and obvious; for the gainsaying or resisting, mentioned in the text, may either signify the bare acts of gainsaying or resisting, or the success and prevalence of the said acts against the persons so gainsaid or resisted; and accordingly the full drift and meaning of the text is, that the apostles' adversaries, by all the virulence of words and violence of actions which they could and would use, should not be able to prevail over them, or run them down; howbeit they would not fail with all their might to attempt it, and to that purpose to gainsay and resist them to the utmost, though in the issue all to little or no effect, unless perhaps to their own confusion. In fine, that, as long as the world stands, Christianity shall be sure to be opposed; and as long as it is opposed, shall certainly overcome.

And so from the thing supposed or implied in the text, I now proceed to

II. The other and next thing positively declared in the same, to wit, *Christ's promise* to his apostles of such an assistance from above, as should overcome and master all their adversaries' opposition; which promise we will consider two ways: 1. According to its form and coherence with the context; and 2. According to the subject matter of it. And,

1. For the first of these. The words being introduced by the causal particle *for*, show that they stand as a reason here assigned of something going before; which we shall find to have been a warning given by Christ to his disciples against those fears and misgiving apprehensions, which he foresaw would be apt to seize and work upon their spirits, when they should find themselves so fiercely and universally opposed on all sides; in which case, though he allowed of caution, yet he was for taking off the fright: nothing considerable being ever achieved by a mind damped and surprised with fear; a passion which will be sure to betray a man in the exercise of all his faculties. For he who fears his enemy, fights for him; or (which is worse) gives him the victory without the trouble of a battle.

Nor can any thing more peculiarly unqualify a man for the office of an apostle or preacher of the gospel, than this degenerate quality: for it makes him unable to look a bold sinner in the

face, to assert a disgusted truth, or to own his commission, when power and interest shall frown him into silence and mean compliances.

Nevertheless, since fear itself may plead reason, when it meets with objects and motives every way equal to the natural workings of it; our Saviour never forbids the passion till he first removes the reason of it, as he does here by opposing the success of omnipotence to the assaults of a mortal force; thereby owning the danger, but overmatching it with the deliverance.

Nor was it a bare deliverance, but a conquest, which Christ designed the first champions of the Christian cause; not merely to bring them off safe from their enemies, but to carry them victorious over them. And conquering, doubtless, is more glorious than not fighting, and to see an enemy fall or fly before one, than to have none at all. All which the great captain of our salvation designed and did for his apostles; and certainly he never exerted his power more to the proof of his Godhead, than when he made such worms to "thresh the mountains," fishermen to silence philosophers, weakness and poverty to brave it over the whole Roman empire, the counsels of senates, and the force of legions; and that with the fairest sort of violence imaginable, viz. binding their hands by sliding into their hearts.

And thus having given an account of the form and scheme of the promise with reference to the context, and what followed, and what went before it; I come now to the other thing to be considered in it, viz. the subject-matter of it, which represents to us these three things.

1. The thing itself promised, viz. "a mouth and wisdom."
2. The person who promised it, which was Christ himself: "I will give you a mouth and wisdom."
3. The way by which Christ performed this promise; not indeed here expressed in the text, but fully inferred from several other texts treating of the same subject; to wit, the effusion of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles presently after Christ's ascension into glory, when, and by virtue whereof, this great promise was made good to them. And here,

1. For the thing promised, "a mouth and wisdom;" that is, an ability of speaking, joined with an equal prudence in action and behaviour. Which things we will consider first singly, and then in conjunction. And,

(1.) For the ability of speaking conferred upon the apostles. It was highly requisite, that those, who were to be the interpreters and spokesmen of heaven, should have a rhetoric taught them from thence too; and as much beyond any that could be taught them by human rules and art, as the subjects they were to speak of surpassed the subject of all human eloquence.

Now this ability of speech, I conceive, was to be attended with these three properties of it.

1st. Great clearness and perspicuity.

2nd. An unaffected plainness and simplicity. And,

3rd. A suitable and becoming zeal or fervour. And,

1st. For its perspicuity: Christ and his apostles well knew, that the great truth delivered by them would support itself, and that barely to deliver it, would be abundantly sufficient to enforce it; nakedness (of all things) being never able to make truth ashamed. There was nothing false, faulty, or suspicious in it, and therefore they were not afraid to venture it in the plainest and most intelligible language. Where indeed the thing to be spoken is unwarrantable, and the design of the speaker as bad, or worse, there, I confess, every word may need a cloak of obscurity both to cover and protect it too: but truth and worth neither need nor affect to keep out of sight, nor the lights of the world to wrap themselves in a cloud. The apostles never taught men to preach or pray in an unknown tongue; nor valued such devotion as had ignorance for its parent. Christ closed his instructions to his disciples with this question, "Do ye understand these things?" And we find no parable, but the rear of it is brought up with an explication. For even when Christ and his apostles preached the most mysterious truths of religion, yet then, though the thing uttered might nonplus their reason, the way and manner of their uttering it was plain, easy, and familiar; and the hearer never put to study, when it was his business only to hear and understand. The oracles of Christ were not like those of Apollo, doubtful and ambiguous, always made to deceive, and commonly to destroy; but, on the contrary, as the grand business of our Saviour, and his apostles after him, was to teach, and that chiefly in order to persuade; so they well knew, that there could be no effectual passage into the will, but through the judgment; nor any free admission into the former, but by a full passport from the latter. And therefore we find not, that in their sermons they were for amusing or astonishing their auditory with difficult nothings, rabbinical whimsies, and remote allusions, which no man of sense and solid reason can hear without weariness and contempt.

Besides that, if we look into the reason of the thing itself, it will be found, that all obscurity of speech is resolvable into the confusion and disorder of the speaker's thoughts; for as thoughts are properly the images and representations of objects to the mind, and words the representations of our thoughts to others, it must needs follow, that all faults or defects in a man's expressions, must presuppose the same in his notions first.

In short, nothing in nature can be imagined more absurd, irrational, and contrary to the very design and end of speaking, than an obscure discourse; for in that case the preacher may as well leave his tongue, and his auditors their ears behind them, as neither he communicate, nor they understand any more of his

mind and meaning, after he has spoken to them, than they did before.

And yet as ridiculous as such fustian bombast from the pulpit is, none are so transported and pleased with it as those who least understand it. For still the greatest admirers of it are the grossest, the most ignorant, and illiterate country people, who, of all men, are the fondest of high-flown metaphors and allegories, attended and set off with scraps of Greek and Latin, though not able even to read so much of the latter, as might save their necks upon occasion.

But laying aside all such studied insignificant trifles, it was the clearness of the apostles' preaching which rendered it victorious and irresistible. And this we may rest upon as certain, that he is still the powerfullest preacher and the best orator, who can make himself best understood. But,

2nd. A second property of the ability of speech, conferred by Christ upon his apostles, was its unaffected plainness and simplicity: it was to be easy, obvious, and familiar; with nothing in it strained or far-fetched; no affected scheme or airy fancies, above the reach or relish of an ordinary apprehension; no, nothing of all this: but their grand subject was truth, and consequently above all these petty arts and poor additions; as not being capable of any greater lustre or advantage, than to appear just as it is. For there is a certain majesty in plainness; as the proclamation of a prince never frisks it in tropes or fine conceits, in numerous and well-turned periods, but commands in sober, natural expressions. A substantial beauty, as it comes out of the hands of nature, needs neither paint nor patch; things never made to adorn, but to cover something that would be hid. It is with expression, and the clothing of a man's conceptions, as with the clothing of a man's body. All dress and ornament supposes imperfections, as designed only to supply the body with something from without, which it wanted, but had not of its own. Gaudery is a pitiful and a mean thing, not extending further than the surface of the body; nor is the highest gallantry considerable to any, but to those who would hardly be considered without it: for in that case indeed there may be great need of an outside, where there is little or nothing within.

And thus also it is with the most necessary and important truths; to adorn and clothe them is to cover them, and that to obscure them. The eternal salvation and damnation of souls are not things to be treated of with jests and witticisms. And he who thinks to furnish himself out of plays and romances with language for the pulpit, shows himself much fitter to act a part in the revels, than for a cure of souls.

"I speak the words of soberness," said St. Paul, Acts xxvi. 25; and I preach the gospel not with "the enticing words of man's wisdom," 1 Cor. ii. 4. This was the way of the apostle's discoursing

of things sacred. Nothing here of the "fringes of the north-star;" nothing of "nature's becoming unnatural;" nothing of "the down of angels' wings," or "the beautiful locks of cherubims:" no starched similitudes, introduced with a "Thus have I seen a cloud rolling in its airy mansion," and the like. No, these were sublimities above the rise of the apostolic spirit. For the apostles, poor mortals, were content to take lower steps, and to tell the world in plain terms, that "he who believed should be saved, and that he who believed not should be damned." And this was the dialect which pierced the conscience, and made the hearers cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" It tickled not the ear, but sunk into the heart: and when men came from such sermons, they never commended the preacher for his taking voice or gesture; for the fineness of such a simile, or the quaintness of such a sentence: but they spoke like men conquered with the overpowering force and evidence of the most concerning truths; much in the words of the two disciples going to Emmaus; "Did not our hearts burn within us, while he opened to us the scriptures?"

In a word, the apostles' preaching was therefore mighty and successful, because plain, natural, and familiar, and by no means above the capacity of their hearers: nothing being more preposterous, than for those who were professedly aiming at men's hearts, to miss the mark, by shooting over their heads.

3rd. The gift of preaching, conferred by Christ upon his apostles, required a suitable zeal and fervour to attend it; for without this, as high and important a truth as the gospel preached by them, none would have believed that it had any powerful effect upon the preacher's own affections, nor consequently that it could have wrought at all more upon other men's. *Missouri* *Keokuk City* This is most certain. So true is it, that the same things, differently expressed, as to the proper effects of persuasion, are indeed not the same. A cold indifference dispirits a discourse; but a due fervour gives it life and authority, and sends it home to the inmost powers of the soul, with an easy insinuation and a deep impression.

But then I do by no means place this zeal in speaking loud, in sweating, or in a boisterous motion or agitation of the body, for all this looks rather like the preacher's wrestling with his auditory, than instructing it; but I place it in his showing a warm and sensible apprehension on his part of the things uttered by him; so that the very manner of his speaking shall demonstrate the real inward sense he has of what he speaks, and that in the judgment of all who hear him.

Thus when Christ accosted Jerusalem with that melting exprobration in Matt. xxiii. 37, 38, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would

not! Behold, your house is left to you desolate." Now what a relenting strain of tenderness was there in this reproof from the great doctor as well as Saviour of souls, and how infinitely more moving than if he had said only, "O ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, how wicked and barbarous is it in you thus to persecute and stone God's prophets! And how can you but expect some severe judgment from God upon you for it?" Who, I say, sees not the vast difference in these two ways of address, as to the vigour and winning compassion of the one, and the low dispirited flatness of the other in comparison? Likewise for St. Paul, observe how he uttered himself in his excellent farewell discourse to the elders of Ephesus, Acts xx., from verse 18 to the end of the chapter, and particularly in verse 31: "Remember," says he, "how that for the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." These were the arguments here used by this great apostle, arguments, in comparison of which he knew that the most flowing rhetoric of words would be but a poor and faint persuasive. And then again in 2 Cor. xi. 29, with what a true and tender passion does he lay forth his fatherly care and concern for all the churches of Christ? "Who," says he, "is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?" than which words nothing doubtless could have issued from the tongue or heart of man more endearing, more pathetic, and affectionate.

And thus much for the ability or gift of speaking, the first member of the promise made by Christ here to his disciples.

(2.) The other and next is that of wisdom, the noblest endowment of the mind of man of all others, of an endless extent, and of a boundless comprehension; and, in a word, the liveliest representation that a created nature can afford of the infinity of its Maker. And this, as it is in men, is properly the great principle, directing them how to demean themselves in all the particular passages, accidents, and occasions of human life, which being in the full compass of them indeed innumerable, to recount and treat of them all here would be next to impossible; but as for that wisdom which most peculiarly belonged to the first dispensers and ministers of the gospel, I shall only mention two instances, in which it most remarkably shows itself: namely,

1st. That they opposed neither things nor persons, any further than they stood in their way in the ministry of it. On the contrary, "I am become all things to all men," says St. Paul, and that neither to gain favour nor interest, but only converts to Christianity, 1 Cor. ix. 22. And again, he owned the very sect of the Pharisees, so far as they owned and contended for the grand article of the resurrection, in Acts xxiii. 6. In like manner he quoted also and approved several things out of some of the heathen poets, as in Acts xvii. 28, and Titus i. 12. In a word, he never rejected any real solid truth, whether spoken by Jew or heathen,

or whatsoever the design of either of them might be in the speaking of it. For as right reason most certainly lies at the foundation of all true religion, so the apostles embraced all that which by genuine consequence was deduced from thence by any sort or sect of men whatsoever; forasmuch as they made not those deductions under the formal notion of such a sect or party, but as they were rational men, arguing rightly upon the general received principles of nature. And accordingly the apostles countenanced and fell in with truth so offered them, wheresoever they found it; they valued a pearl, though taken up from a dunghill. And to have done otherwise, had neither been zeal nor discretion, but a kind of ridiculous and morose partiality. But,

2nd. The other instance of the wisdom given by our Saviour to his apostles, was their resolute opposing all doctrines and interests whatsoever, so far as they stood in opposition to the gospel. They would not so much as hold their peace in such a case, but their proceeding was absolute and peremptory, Acts v. 29, "We ought to obey God rather than men." And when a point of Christian liberty was endangered by the judaizing brethren, in Gal. ii. 5, "We gave place to them," says the blessed St. Paul, "no, not for an hour." And we know how he withstood St. Peter himself to the face upon a like occasion. We read also how the same apostle preached of justice and temperance before Felix, who he notoriously knew lived in a lewd incestuous marriage, and was equally infamous for bribery and extortion.

And this undoubtedly was his wisdom, his high and apostolic wisdom; though had he indeed lived in such an age as measures conscience by latitude and compliance, and wisdom by what a man can get, much another kind of character would no doubt have attended him, and he would be taxed as a weak, hasty, and inconsiderate person, for reflecting upon and provoking the governor, who had used him fairly and civilly: so that if he had been but less free of his tongue, and a little more free of his purse, he might in all likelihood have been very easily released, and perhaps preferred too: but now, poor man, he has quite lost himself.

Such would have been the descants of our modern politics upon this occasion; but after all, if the word of truth itself may be heard, that, we shall find, knows no wisdom in an apostle, but what makes him bold and fearless in the cause of the church and of religion, and ready to discharge a rebuke upon any of the highest rank of right worshipful or right honourable sinners, where a scandalous guilt shall call for or make it necessary; the contrary practice being incomparably the grossest of follies, and such as will be sure to lay a man low enough in the next world, whatsoever preferment it may raise him to in this.

And thus we have seen here the full compass of our Saviour's

promise to his ministers and disciples, even the two most valuable perfections of man's nature, and the very top of the wisest of the heathens' wish, *sapere et fari*, "a mouth and wisdom," a sagacity of mind, and a command of speech. And he bestows them also in their proper lustre and greatest advantage; that is to say, united, and like two stars in conjunction; many indeed being able to bring mouth enough to the ministry, though as for wisdom, that may even shift for itself; but still those two stand best by mutual support and communication, elocution without wisdom being empty and irrational, and wisdom without elocution barren and unprofitable. *Præstat eloqui, modo cum prudentiâ, quàm sine eloquio acutissime cogitare*, said the great master of eloquence. A faculty to speak properly, and to act wisely, was a legacy fit to be left by the Saviour of the world to those by whom he intended to instruct the world. And so much for the first general thing proposed from the words, to wit, the thing promised; I proceed now to the

2. The person promising, who was Christ himself; "I will give you a mouth and wisdom." I lay a particular stress and remark upon this, because Christ seems by this very thing to give his disciples an assurance of his resurrection. He knew that it would not be long before they should see him crucified, killed, and laid in the grave, and so under all the umbrages of weakness and mortality that human nature could undergo; but when again, in the midst of all this, they should remember, that there was still a promise in store not yet fulfilled, and withal not capable of being fulfilled by a person dead and extinct, they must needs from thence have concluded that he could not abide in that condition, but must irresistibly triumph over the grave, ascend and enter into a state of sovereignty and glory. Every tongue which sat upon the apostles at the day of Pentecost, spoke aloud the resurrection and ascension of him who had promised, and then gave the same. For surely they could not expect to receive gifts from above, while the giver of them was under ground. And so I proceed to the

3. And last thing proposed from the text, which was, to show by what means Christ conferred those gifts upon his disciples and apostles; and that we find was by the effusion of the Holy Ghost, the author and giver of every good and perfect gift, ministerial gifts more especially. Those were endowments too great to spring either from the strength of nature, or the force of industry. The conferring of which we have eminently set forth in Matt. x. 19, 20: "Take no thought," says our Saviour, "what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak." They were surely the first, and perhaps will be the last, who ever did, or are like to speak so much sense and reason extempore. But the cause is assigned in the next verse, "For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of

the Father which speaketh in you." And this glorious day, we know, informs us that it spoke at length with a witness, with fiery tongues and a flaming eloquence, and such a one as bore down all contradiction before it. This was the inspiration which filled and raised them so much above themselves, for their work was too big for a mere mortal strength; and therefore as God himself was to send, so he was also to furnish out his own ambassadors at the cost of heaven (as I may with reverence express it). The apostles, we find, were not (and that by our Saviour's particular order) to stir out of Jerusalem till the Holy Ghost was come upon them, and then they went forth armed at all points, to encounter either Jews or Gentile; and they did it both with courage and wisdom, and consequently with triumph and success.

And accordingly we are to carry it in perpetual remembrance, that while the work of preaching the gospel continues in the world (as he who is truth itself has assured us it ever will), the Spirit never will be wanting to the faithful preachers of it in a suitable assistance of them: though not in the same measure, we own, in which the apostles were assisted by it, whose work being peculiar and extraordinary, their assistance was to be so too. Infallibility was in the apostles a real privilege, but now-a-days an insolent, or rather impudent pretence. And yet nothing is more confidently laid claim to, both by the papist and the enthusiast, than the Spirit; but none certainly ever yet ventured to speak lies and nonsense by the Spirit but themselves. To some of which persons indeed the world may allow a sort of wisdom, but far from the wisdom which is from above; and a mouth too they are known to have, but a mouth never so open to speak as to devour. Christ defend his church from such inspired impostors, and vouchsafe his mighty presence to all the true (though too much despised) ministers of it, according to the measure of that glorious promise, and the last uttered by him here on earth at his victorious ascension into heaven: "Go, teach all nations; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

To whom therefore, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, three persons and one God, be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON XXVIII.

THE FALSE METHODS OF GOVERNING AND ESTABLISHING THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND EXPLODED.

GALATIANS II. 5.

To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

IF in the compass of so small a space, as from the first entrance of Christianity into the world to the times of the apostle Paul, the church of Galatia (then but newly planted) could pass into so corrupt and degenerate a condition as this epistle represents it in, let none be surprised to find the very grossest errors sometimes go into the very best and purest churches; but wonder rather, that after so many centuries since passed, there should still be (what our Saviour foretold there should scarce be at his second coming) such a thing as faith upon earth, or indeed any church at all.

As for that of Galatia, the subject of the text before us, and consisting of great numbers, both of Jews and Gentiles, just converted to Christianity, there arose a very early and fierce dispute amongst them, whether the Jewish customs and ceremonies were to be joined with, and adopted into the Christian profession? and consequently, whether the converted Gentiles ought not to be circumcised according to the law of Moses, as well as they had been baptized according to the institution of Christ? The Jewish converts, whose education had made them infinitely fond of the Mosaic rites, and who, though they had the substance, still doted upon the shadow, even after they had given up their names to Christ, eagerly contended for the continuance of circumcision, and that not amongst themselves only, but for obliging the converted Gentiles also to the same. And in this their error they chanced unhappily to be the more confirmed by a temporizing practice of St. Peter himself, the great apostle of the circumcision. Who yet (as great as he was), by judaizing in some things, and that even contrary to his own judgment, as well as to the truth of the gospel (the text itself telling us, in ver. 12, 13 of this chapter, that it was indeed no better than downright dissimulation), he spread and carried the infection much further by the authority of his example; so that by this his insincere dealing and compliance, he mightily fixed these half Christian Jews, not only in a confident persistence in their error, but gave them heart also to expostulate the matter very insolently, even with, St. Paul himself, who being by divine

commission no less the apostle of the Gentiles than St. Peter was of the Jews, with a courage equal to his sincerity, both taught and practised quite otherwise than that his brother apostle. Nay, so high did their judaizing impudence work, that they began to question the very truth of this doctrine, as St. Paul not obscurely intimates in ch. i. of this epistle, ver. 9. To all which they add their no less rude reflections upon his apostleship, extolling St. Peter and others as pillars, but undervaluing St. Paul, as nothing in comparison of them. And lastly, to complete these scurrilities, we have their vilifying reproaches of his person, their ridiculing his bodily presence as mean, and his speech as contemptible; and in a word, himself also as by no means so gifted a brother, forsooth, so powerful a holderforth, nor of such edifying lungs and loudness, as some of their own schismatical tribe.

This, I say, was the language of a set of schismatics in the church of Corinth, mentioned in 2 Cor. x. 10, and the like, no doubt, of the brotherhood in Galatia; and not of them only, but so long as there shall be governors and government in the church, the same, we may be sure, will be naturally the cry and virulence against them of all schismatics, sectaries, and dissenters whatsoever.

But as to St. Paul's case now before us, he in his apostolic circuit or visitation coming to visit these hopeful converts in Galatia, accompanied with his beloved Titus (not indeed then circumcised), finds himself very vehemently pressed by them, and that with an importunity next to compulsion, to have him circumcised also, according to the false persuasion they had conceived, of the necessary and perpetual use of circumcision. Nevertheless, as false and confident as this persuasion of theirs was, and as positively as it stood condemned by St. Paul, it wanted not for several arguments, and those, seemingly, at least, not inconsiderable, to give colour to the defence of it. As, to instance in some of them, might not these Galatians have pleaded, for the continuance of circumcision, that Christ himself declared, that he came not "to destroy the law of Moses, but to fulfil it;" and if so, was not circumcision one of the most considerable parts of that law? And indeed so considerable, as to be the grand obligation to bind men to all the rest? Did not also Christ command his own disciples to hear and to do whatsoever the scribes taught them out of Moses' chair? And did those scribes teach or own any thing as more necessary than circumcision? Moreover, did not St. Peter, who was the proper apostle of the circumcision (as we have shown), agree and concur with these men in this practice? or, at least, not dissuade them from it? Nay and did not St. Paul himself cause his beloved Timothy to be circumcised? And if in this matter there should be any difference between these two apostles, would not the

advantage be clearly on St. Peter's side, who having conversed with Christ in the flesh, might rationally be presumed to know the true sense and design of the gospel more exactly than St. Paul, who had not so conversed with him? And consequently, that it must be much safer to adhere to the former, in this controversy, than to the latter? And lastly, besides and above all this, might they not plead themselves extremely scandalized, grieved, and offended, at the practice of such brethren as should lay aside circumcision, which they were sure was at first commanded, and never since (for what they could learn) forbidden by Christ; but rather so much the contrary, that to countenance, and, as it were, even christen this ceremony, Christ submitted to be circumcised himself.

Now surely these things could not but carry some more than ordinary show of reason with them; and I frankly declare, that I cannot but own them for arguments much more forcible against the abrogation of circumcision, than any that I could ever yet find our nonconformists were able to bring for the abrogation of the ceremonies of our church. And yet, as forcible as they were, or seemed to be, they had no other effect upon St. Paul, than that with an inflexible steadiness he rejects both the arguments themselves, and those who urged them; and upon a full cognizance of the merits of the whole cause, he peremptorily withstands those judaizing trimmers, and without the least regard either to the occasional communion, which St. Peter himself had lately vouchsafed them, or fear of his depriving power for doing so (if he had any), this high-church apostle (as we may worthily call him) resolves neither "to give place to him nor them, no, not for an hour."

This historical account of the occasion of the words here pitched upon by me for my text, I thought necessary to premise, for the better clearing and handling of them; in order to which I shall consider in them these five particulars.

1. A fierce opposition made by some erroneous Christians in the church of Galatia against St. Paul, the great apostle of the gentiles, and consequently of prime authority in that church.

2. The cause of this opposition; which was their importunate and unreasonable pressing of him to the practice of a thing as necessary, which neither was in itself necessary, nor so accounted by him.

3. The way of their managing this opposition, which was by bespattering his doctrine, and detracting from the credit and authority of his person, for withstanding these their encroaching demands.

4. The way which the apostle took to deal with such violent encroachers, and that was by not yielding or giving place to them, "no, not for an hour."

5. And lastly, the end and design driven at by the apostle in

this his method of dealing with them; and that was no less than the very preservation of the gospel itself, in the truth and purity of it, in these words, "that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."

The sum of all which five particulars I shall gather into this one proposition; which shall be the subject of the following discourse: namely, That the best and most apostolical way to establish a church, and secure to it a lasting continuance of the truth and purity of the gospel, is for the governors and ministers thereof not to give place at all, or yield up the least lawful, received constitution of it, to the demands or pretences of such as *dissent* or *separate* from it, though never so urging and importunate.

This, I say, is a most plain, natural, undeniable inference, from the words and practice of St. Paul himself; and that in a case so like ours in the church of England, that a liker can hardly be imagined. And accordingly, I shall manage the prosecution of this proposition under these three general heads.

I. I shall examine and consider the pretences alleged by dissenters for our quitting, or yielding up, any of the rites, ceremonies, or orders of our church.

II. I shall show what are naturally like to be the consequences of such a yielding or giving them up. And,

III. And lastly, I shall show what influence and efficacy a strict adherence to the constitutions of our church, and an absolute refusal to part with any of them, is like to have towards a lasting settlement of the same, and of the truth and purity of the gospel amongst us.

But before I enter upon a more particular discussion of any of these, I must premise this observation, as the ground and rule of all that I shall say upon this subject: namely, that the case is altogether the same of requiring, upon the account of conscience, the forbearance of practices in themselves lawful, out of a pretence of their unlawfulness: and of imposing upon the conscience practices in themselves not necessary, upon an allegation and pretence of their necessity: which latter was heretofore the case between St. Paul and those judaizing Galatians, as the former has been, and still is, between the church of England and the nonconformists. Now both of these courses are really and equally superstitious; for though amongst us loudness and ignorance have still carried the charge and cry against the ceremonies of our church, yet (as a very learned divine* of our own has fully proved in a sermon of his at a visitation) this charge truly recoils upon our dissenters themselves in the very point and matter now before us. For, as to urge the practice of a thing in its nature really indifferent, as a part of God's worship, and for itself necessary to be practised (which the church of England never did, nor does, in the injunction of any its ceremonies), is

* Bishop Sanderson.

properly superstitious; so, on the other side, to make it necessary to abstain from practices in themselves lawful and indifferent (as the dissenters do, by alleging them to be sinful and unlawful, and consequently that to abstain from them is part of our obedience to almighty God), this is altogether as superstitious as the other, and as diametrically opposite to, and destructive of that Christian liberty, which Christ has invested his church with. Which observation being thus premised, I shall now enter upon

I. The first general thing proposed, to wit, *to examine and consider the several pretences alleged by dissenters, for our quitting or giving up any of the constitutions or customs of our church*: and here I shall not pretend to recount them all in particular, but only at large, and as they are derivable from and reducible to these three particulars: 1. The unlawfulness; 2. The inexpediency; and 3, and lastly, the pretended smallness (as they word it) of the things excepted against by them. Each of which I shall touch very briefly upon. And,

1. For their leading plea of the unlawfulness of our ceremonies, grounded upon that old, baffled argument, drawn from the unlawfulness of will-worship, and the prohibition of adding to or detracting ought from the word or worship of God, no other answer need or can be given to it, than that which has been given over and over, viz. that our ceremonies are not looked upon either as divine worship, or as any necessary essential part of it; but only as circumstances, and external appurtenances, for the more decent performance of that worship: for that men should of their own will impose or use any thing as the necessary worship of God, or add any thing to that worship as a necessary essential part of it, this questionless (as the forementioned allegations sufficiently prove, and nobody that I know of denies) must needs be sinful: but if from hence it be affirmed also, that no circumstance is to be allowed about the divine worship, but what is declared and enjoined by express scripture, the consequence of that is so insufferably ridiculous, that it will extend to the making it unlawful for the church to appoint any stated place or hour for God's public worship, that it will reach also to the very taking away of pulpits, reading-desks, fonts, and every thing else circumstantially ministering to the discharge of divine service, if not expressly mentioned and commanded in the written word of God. And let these men, upon the foregoing principle, avoid the absurdity of this consequence, if they can. But it has been well remarked, that the truth is, those men do not really believe themselves, while they thus plead against the ceremonies and orders of our church. For when a late act of parliament required all persons in office, or designing to qualify themselves for any office in the state, to receive the sacrament according to the use and order of the church of England (which we all know was

to receive it kneeling), we find not that those men, in such cases, refused the doing of it (how idolatrous soever both now and then they pretended it to be), rather than quit the least office of gain which they actually had, or miss of any which they were in pursuit of: which practice of theirs, had it been unlawful, surely men of such tender consciences, as they own themselves to be of, would never have been brought to; forasmuch as not the least unlawful thing ought to be done for the greatest advantage whatsoever: though it may be quite otherwise, I confess, with those new lights, whose humour is their law, their will their reason, and their interest their whole religion. And so to pass from hence to

2. Their second plea, to wit, of the inexpediency or inconvenience of the said ceremonies in the divine worship: to which I answer these two things.

(1.) That *expedient* or *inexpedient* being words of a general indefinite sense or signification, and upon that account determinable chiefly by the several fancies, humours, and apprehensions of men about one and the same thing (so that what is judged expedient by one man, is often judged as inexpedient by another); the judgment of expedient or inexpedient in matters to be passed into law, ought in all reason to rest wholly in the legislators and governors of any community; and consequently, that no private persons whatsoever ought to be looked upon as competent judges of the inexpediency of that which the legislative power has once enacted and established as expedient. But, (2.) I affirm also, that what is not only in itself lawful, but likewise highly conducive to so great a concern of religion, as decency and order in divine worship certainly is, and that to such a degree conducive to the same, that without it neither order nor decency could possibly continue or subsist; that surely cannot, ought not to be reckoned inexpedient upon any contrary account, considerable enough to be compared with, and much less to overbalance that great one of order and regularity in our addresses to almighty God: which I affirm the ceremonies used by our church are most properly subservient to. For since the outward acts of divine worship cannot be performed, but with some circumstances and postures of the body, either every man must be left to his own arbitrement to use what circumstances and postures he pleases; or a rule must be fixed to direct these things after one and the same manner: for the former of these will of necessity infer great diversity and variety in the discharge of the divine worship, and that by as great a necessity will infer such a disorder, indecency, and confusion in the same, as nothing but a uniformity in the behaviour and circumstances of all persons joining in that worship can possibly prevent. An argument, no doubt, worth the consideration of all, who must needs know, that God will not be served by halves, but be honoured by body

as well as soul (the whole man being less than enough for all our solemn acts of devotion). And so we come now to the

3. And last of their exceptions, grounded upon the smallness of the things excepted against; to which also my answer is twofold.

(1.) That these things being in themselves lawful, and not only so, but also determined by sufficient authority, their smallness is so far from being a reason why we should refuse and stand out against the use of them, that it is an unanswerable argument, why they should without any demur submit to and comply with authority in matters which they themselves confess to be of no very great moment. For it ought to be a very great and weighty matter indeed, which can warrant a man in his disobedience to the injunctions of lawful authority in any thing whatsoever. And that which is a reason why men should comply with their governors, I am sure can be no reason why their governors should give place to them. But,

(2.) I add further, that nothing actually enjoined by law is or ought to be looked upon as small or little, as to the use or forbearance of it during the continuance of that law, nor yet as a sufficient reason for the abrogation of that law; since, be the thing never so small in itself, yet being by great deliberation first established, and for a long time since received in the church, and contended for with real and great reason on the one side, be the reasons never so plausible (which yet hitherto does not appear) on the other, yet the consequence of a change cannot be accounted small, since it is certainly very hazardous at best, and doubtful what mischief such a change may occasion, how far it may proceed, and where it may end; especially since the experience of all governments has made it evident, that there was hardly ever any thing altered in any settled estate, which was not followed by further and further alterations, and several inconveniences attending those alterations, unforeseen indeed at first, but such as in the event made too great impressions upon the public to be accounted either small or inconsiderable.

These exceptions therefore being thus stripped of their plausibility and force too, and returned upon the makers of them; it follows, that notwithstanding all the late harangues concerning our differing in lesser things (as the phrase still goes), and our contending about shadows and the like, made by some amongst us, who would fain be personally popular at the cost of the public, and build themselves a reputation with the rabble upon the ruins of that church, which by all the obligations of oaths and gratitude they are bound to support, as, I am sure, that supports them; it follows, I say, that for the governors of our church to be ready, after all this, to yield up the received constitutions of it, either to the infirmity, or importunity, or the plausible exceptions (as their advocates are pleased to term them) of our clamo-

rous dissenters, is so far from being a part either of the piety or prudence of those governors (as the same advocates insinuate), that it is the fear of many, both pious and prudent too, that in the end it is like to prove no other than the letting a thief into the house, only to avoid the noise and trouble of his rapping at the door.

And thus much for the first thing proposed, which was to examine and consider the pretences alleged by dissenters for our quitting or yielding up any of the constitutions of our church. I now come to the

II. General thing, which is, to show *what are naturally like to be the consequences of such a yieldance*. In order to which I shall consider these two things: 1. What the temper and disposition of those men, who press for such compliances with them, used to be. And, 2. What the effect and consequence of such compliances has been heretofore. And,

1. For the temper of the men: this certainly should be considered; and if it ought to give any force to their demands, it ought to be extremely peaceable and impartial. But are there any qualities incident to the nature of man, which these persons are further from? For do they treat the governors of the church with any other appellation but that of Baal's priests, formalists, dumb dogs, proud popish prelates, haters of God and good men, and the like? I say, is not this their usual dialect? And can we imagine that the spirit of Christianity can suggest such language and expressions? Is it possible, that where true religion governs in the heart, it should thus utter itself at the mouth? And to show yet further, that this temper can manifest itself by actions as well as words, did not those who now plead conscience against law, in the year forty-one, persecute, plunder, kill, and murder those who pleaded and followed conscience according to law? And can any one assure the government that they will not, under the same circumstances, do the same things again?

And for their impartiality, did they ever grant allowance or toleration to any who were dissenters from them? The presbyterian would grant none, and he has given the world so much under his own hand, in those many vehement books written by him on this subject; one of which, I well remember long since, was by a kind of sanctified quibble, entitled, "*Intolerable Toleration*;" a pamphlet mean enough, and of little note in the world, but as it served to show the temper of the presbyterian, and how utterly averse he was to the indulging of any of a different persuasion from himself. And when his younger brother the independent, the abler and more thriving sectarian of the two, had tripped up his heels *in the Lord* (a word then much in fashion), and so brought in his independency, with a kind of toleration along with it; yet still prelacy, no less than papacy itself, stood expressly excepted from

any benefit, favour, or toleration, from the one party or the other; that is to say, both of them were ready to tolerate Turks, Jews, infidels (and even all who will but acknowledge one God), rather than those of the communion of the church of England. This has been the way and temper of the persons whom we have to deal with. And now is it not pity but the whole government, civil and ecclesiastical, should bend and veil to such patterns of humility and self-denial, and forthwith abrogate and destroy all its laws, only because there is a faction disposed to break through and trample upon them? A faction which nothing can win, nothing oblige, and which will be sure to requite such a favour once done them, by turning it to the utmost reproach, and ruin (if possible) those who did it. And thus, having given so short account of the temper and disposition of these men, I come now in the

2. Second place to consider, what the effect and consequence of such compliances and relaxations has been heretofore. And for this I appeal to the judgment, reading, and experience of all who have in any measure applied themselves to the observation of men and things, whether they ever yet found that any who pressed for indulgencies and forbearances, did it with a real intent to acquiesce, and take up in those forbearances once granted them, without proceeding any further? None, I am sure, ever yet did, but used them only as an art or instrument to get into power, and to make every concession a step to a further demand; since every grant renders the person to whom it is made so much the more considerable, and dangerous to be denied, when he shall take the boldness to ask more. To grant, is generally to give ground. And such persons ask some things only, in order to get others without asking; for no encroachers upon, or enemies to any public constitution, ask all at first. Seditious itself is modest in the beginning; and no more than toleration may be petitioned for, when in the issue nothing less than empire and dominion is designed.

The nature of man acts the same way, whether in matters civil or ecclesiastical. And can we soon forget the methods by which that violent faction grew upon the throne between the years forty and sixty? Did not the facility and goodness of king Charles I. embolden their impudence instead of satisfying their desires? Was not every condescension, every concession, every remission of his own right, so far from allaying the fury of their greedy appetites, that, like a breakfast, it rather called up the stomach, and fitted it the more for a dinner? Did not craving still grow upon granting, till nothing remained to be asked on one side, or given on the other, but the life of the giver?

Thus it was with the state, and I would fain hear any solid reason to prove that it will not fare alike with the church. For how has the papacy grown to that enormous height, and assumed

such an extravagant power over sovereign princes, but by taking advantage from their own grants and favours to that rapacious and ungrateful see? which still took occasion from thence to raise itself gradually to further and further pretensions; till courtesy quickly passed into claim; and what was got by petition, was held by prerogative: so that at length insolence, grown big and bold with success, knew no bounds, but trampled upon the neck of emperors, controlled the sceptre with the crosier, and, in the face of the world, openly avowed a superiority and preeminence over crowned heads. Thus grew the papacy, and by the same ways will also grow other sects; for there is a papacy in every sect or faction; they all design the very same height of greatness, though the pope alone hitherto has had the wit and fortune to compass it.

And thus having shown what have been the effects of such concessions heretofore, as well as described the temper of the persons who now press for them; I suppose it will not be very difficult for us to judge, what are like to be the future effects and consequences of the same amongst ourselves. Concerning which I shall lay down this assertion; That what effects and consequences any thing has had formerly and usually, and what in its own nature it tends to, and is apt to produce, it is infinitely sottish and irrational to imagine and suppose that it will not produce and cause in the world for the future. And I believe hardly any nation or government, but ours, would suffer the same cheat to be trumped upon it twice immediately together. Every society in the world stands in the strength of certain laws, customs, and received usages, uniting the several parts of it into one body; and accordingly the parting with any one of those laws or customs is a real dissolution of the continuity, and consequently a partial destruction of the whole. It certainly shakes and weakens all the fabric; and weakness is but destruction begun; it tends to it, and naturally ends in it.

But to pass from argumentations founded upon the general nature of things, to the same made evident to sense and particular instances; let us here first of all suppose our dissenters to be dealt with upon terms of comprehension (as they call it) and taken into the communion of the church, without submitting to the present conditions of its communion, or any necessary obligation to obey the established rules of it, then these things must follow; first, that men shall come into the national ministry of the church of England full of the Scotch covenant, and all those rebellious principles fresh and keen upon their spirits, which raised and carried on the late fatal war. Then will it also follow, that in the same diocese, and sometimes in the very same town, some shall use the surplice, and some shall not; and each shall have their parties prosecuting one another with the bitterest hatreds and animosities. Some in the same church, and at the

same time, shall receive the sacrament kneeling, some standing, and others possibly sitting; some shall use the cross in baptism, and others shall not only not use it themselves, but shall also inveigh and preach against those who do. Some shall read this part of the common prayer, some that, and some perhaps none at all. And where (as in cathedrals) they cannot avoid the having it read by others, they shall come into the church when it is done, and stepping up into the pulpit (with great gravity no doubt) shall conceive a long, crude, extemporary prayer, in reproach of all the prayers which the church, with such admirable prudence and devotion, had been making before. Nay, in the same cathedral, you shall see one prebendary in a surplice, another in a long cloak, another in a short coat, or jacket; and in the performance of the public service some standing up at the creed, the *Gloria Patri*, and the reading of the gospel; and others sitting, and perhaps laughing, and winking upon their fellow-schismatics, in scoff of those who practise these decent orders of the church. And from hence the mischief shall pass from priest to people, dividing them also into irreconcilable parties and factions; so that some shall come to church when such a one preaches, and absent themselves when another does. I will not hear this formalist, says one; and I will not hear that schismatic (with better reason) says another. But in the mean while the church, by these horrible disorders, is torn in pieces, and the common enemies of it, the papists (and some who hate it as much), gratified. These, I say, are some of the certain, unavoidable effects of comprehension; nor indeed could any other, or better, be expected by those, who knew that their surest way to ruin the church, would be to get into the preferments of it. So that I dare avouch, that to bring in comprehension, is nothing else but, in plain terms, to establish a schism in the church by law, and so bring a plague into the very bowels of it, which is more than sufficiently endangered already, by having one in its neighbourhood; a plague which shall eat out the very heart and soul, and consume the vitals and spirits of it, and this to such a degree, that in the compass of a few years it shall scarce have any visible being or subsistence, or so much as the face of a national church to be known by.

But now from comprehension it may be natural and proper enough for us to pass to toleration. Concerning which latter, since it has had the fortune to get a law (or something like a law) made in its behalf, I think there cannot be matter of greater moment or truer charity, than to inform men's consciences how far this new law will warrant them in their separation from the church. For the vulgar and less knowing part of the nation do verily reckon that this, as an act of toleration, has utterly cancelled all former obligations, which did or might lie upon them, to join with the church in the public worship of God. But this

is a very great and dangerous mistake, and may, if persisted in, cost them no less than their souls; for certain it is, that there are laws extant amongst us, enjoining conformity to, and communion with the established church, as likewise obedience to the pastors thereof, legally set over it and the respective members of the same: and consequently, that as long as the obligation of these laws continues, conformity to it must be a duty, and nonconformity a sin; and lastly, that the obligation of these laws does and must continue, till the said laws are actually repealed; which as yet, I am sure they are not, and I hope never will. Thus therefore stands our case. But what effect then, will some say, has this act for toleration? Why, truly, none at all, as to the nature and quality of the actions commanded or prohibited by the preceding positive laws of the church: but as to the penalties annexed to those laws against the violators of them, these indeed are taken off and rescinded by this toleration (or indulgence rather, for strictly it is no more). So that it may, I confess, give temporal impunity to such as transgress upon this account; but for all that, it can never by so doing warrant the transgression itself: it may indeed indemnify the person, but cannot take away the guilt, which resulting from the very nature of the actions is inseparable from it. Nor is it able to take off all sorts of penalties neither; forasmuch as those enacted by the divine law can never be remitted or abrogated by any human law or temporal authority whatsoever. And therefore our separatists will do well to consider, that the laws of our church (admitting them to be but human laws) yet so long as they neither require any thing false in belief, nor immoral in practice, stand ratified by that general law of God, commanding obedience to all lawful, though but civil and temporal authorities; and consequently oblige the conscience, in the strength of that general divine law, to an obedience to all that shall be enacted and enjoined by the said authorities. So that when God shall come to pass sentence upon men for their disobedience to the same, whether in this world or the next, I fear that no plea of toleration will be able to ward off the execution.

Most true it is, both from principles of philosophy and divinity, that the abrogation of the positive declared penalties of a law is no abrogation or repeal of the law itself. And accordingly, upon this occasion I must declare, that penalties and rewards are not of the essence of a law, but extrinsic to it; nor does any law owe its obliging power to them, but solely to the sovereign will of the legislators; so that the taking away the penalties of any law does but leave the obliging power of the law as it was before; law being properly nothing else, but the will of the supreme power to the persons subject to it, concerning something to be done or not done, possessed or not possessed by, or any way belonging to, the said persons. This, I affirm, comprehends the whole nature of a

law precisely considered: and as for the annexion of punishments to the violation, or of rewards to the performance of it, they are not of the precise intrinsic nature and obligation of a law, but are added only as appendages to strengthen it, and procure a more certain awe to it and performance of it: forasmuch as men will be more likely not to transgress a law, being under the fear of a declared punishment for so doing, and to perform it upon a persuasion of a sure promised reward for such a performance, than if neither of these were added to it. Nevertheless, had God said to mankind, "I command you to do this, and my will is that you forbear that," without expressing any reward for doing the former, or penalty for not doing the latter; it had been as duly and essentially a law, and the obligation thereof as real, as if the reward and penalty had been by an express sanction declared to either. And if any one should here object, How then could God punish for any neglect of his law, or reward for the doing of it, had there been no sanction of a punishment for the former, nor of reward for the latter? I answer, that the sovereignty and justice of God, together with the nature and merit of every action of the creature, will sufficiently account for this, without recurring to any positive sanction of penalties or rewards; it being unquestionably just with God (and natural conscience, with the *τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ*, is sufficient to teach every man that it is so) to punish an action, in the nature of it worthy of punishment, though he should not declare by any positive sanction beforehand, that he would punish it; and in like manner he may freely reward any good action, though he should never oblige himself by any precedent promise so to do. And upon this account it seems to me very remarkable, that in the ten commandments (which are so many particular laws of God) there are seven of the ten without either reward or penalty in the decalogue annexed to them; and no doubt, though God had never expressed either of them elsewhere in the writings of Moses, they had, notwithstanding, been as essentially laws, and as really obliging, as they were afterwards upon the clearest and most express declaration of the said rewards and penalties. And here, I confess, I look upon God's declaring the addition of penalties and rewards to his laws, rather as an effect of his goodness, than of his strict justice; nothing, that I know of, obliging him thereunto upon that account. Not but that I acknowledge also, that such a declaration adds great strength to his laws, as to their prevalence upon men to observe them. But for all that, to prevail with men actually to do their duty, and to oblige them to it, are very different things, and proceed upon very different grounds. The laws of men, I own, are extremely lame and defective, without these two great props to support them, and very hardly able (especially since the corruption of man's nature by sin) to compass the proper ends of laws upon men, barely by the sense

of precise duty. So that if there were no rewards or punishments proposed, there would hardly be any actual obedience. However a law will still be truly and properly a law, so long as it obliges men, though it may be unable to bring them actually to obey it. As a cripple, though never so lame and weak, and even with his legs cut off too, is a man still, and as essentially, though not as integrally so, as he was before.

This I thought fit to discourse about the nature and obligation of laws, penalties, and rewards, upon this occasion. But to return to the high and mighty piece of policy sublimate (as I may call it), toleration: I am far from grudging our dissenters the benefit of the law they have obtained (if it be such), and further from soliciting a repeal of it; but being providentially engaged in the subject I am now upon, I cannot but, as a divine, discharge my conscience both to God and the world, by declaring what I judge, according to the best of my reason, will, and unavoidably must, be the consequences of a thing which this church and kingdom, ever since they were a church and kingdom, have been wholly strangers to. And because such consequences, if drawn out to the utmost, would be innumerable, I shall only mention one instead of all the rest, as being certain, obvious, and undeniable; and that is, the vast increase of sects and heresies amongst us, which, where all restraint is taken off, must of necessity grow to the highest pitch that the devil himself can raise such a Babel to; so that there shall not be one bold ringleading knave or fool, who shall have the confidence to set up a new sect, but shall find proselytes enough to wear his name, and list themselves under his banner; of which the Quakers* are a demonstration past all dispute. And then what a vast part of this poor deluded people must of necessity be drawn after these impostures! So that as number and novelty generally run down truth and paucity for a while; the church, and orthodox part of the nation in communion with it, will probably in a short space be overborne and swallowed up by the spreading mischief. And moreover, since it is impossible for government or society to subsist long, where there is no national bond or cement of religion to hold it together, it must quickly dissolve into confusion: and since confusion cannot last always, but that it must in the issue settle into something or other: that something here no doubt will and must be popery, popery infallibly and irresistibly: for the church of England being once suppressed, no other church or sect amongst us (for all besides it are no better) has any bottom or foundation, or indeed any tolerable pretence to set up and settle itself upon.

And that this fatal consequence thus drawn is neither false nor precarious, we may be assured from the papists themselves. For

* George Fox, an illiterate cobbler, first beginner and head of them.

did not their late agent* who lost his life in their service, and whose letters are so well known, tell us in one of them, "that the way by which he intended to have popery brought in, was by toleration; and that if an act for general liberty of conscience could be obtained, it would give the greatest blow to the protestant religion here, that ever it received from its birth?" And did he not also complain, "that all their disappointments, miseries, and hazards were owing to that fatal revocation" (as he calls it) "of the king's declaration for liberty of conscience?" And lastly, does he not affirm, that all the advantages they expected to make, was by the help of the nonconformists, as presbyterians, independents, and other sects? (I transcribe his own words.) And shall we not here believe, that the papists themselves best knew what were the properest and most efficacious ways for the prosecuting their own interest? Nay, and did not king James II., with great ostentation as well as earnestness, often declare, that he would have a kind of *magna charta*, forsooth, or standing law for liberty of conscience in this nation for ever? And can we believe that his design was to keep out popery by this project? No, surely; for such as believe even transubstantiation itself, cannot believe this. So that let all our separatists and dissenters know, that they are the pope's journeymen to carry on his work; and for ought I know, (were but king James amongst us,) might be treated, together with his nuncio, at Guildhall. They are, I say, his tools, to do that for him which he cannot do for himself (as a carpenter cannot be a hatchet, how effectually soever he may use it). In a word, they are his harbingers and forerunners to prepare and make plain a way for him to come amongst us; and consequently they, even they, who are the loudest criers out against popery, are the surest and most industrious factors for it. For it is evident to the whole world, that it is their weakening of the church of England by their separation from it, and their insufferable virulent invectives against it, which makes old Renard the pope, with his wolves about him, presume, that he may attack it now (being thus weakened by our encouraged dissenters to his hands) with victory and success. The thief first breaks the hedge and mounds of the vineyard, to fetch away a few clusters; but the wild boar enters by the same breach, and makes havoc of all. But let us in the mean time, with all Christian submission, wait the good pleasure of almighty God, and our governors, for one seven years, and by that time, I question not but we shall see what this new project tends to, and is like to end in; while, at present, we have but too great reason to believe, that the chief design of some of the busiest contrivers and most indefatigable promoters of it was, and is, by such a promiscuous toleration of so many sects and heresies amongst us, to bring the church of England at length to need a toleration itself, and not to have it when it needs it.

As to which truly primitive church (whatsoever fate may attend it) this may and must be said of it, that it is a church which claims nothing of secular power to itself, but like a poor orphan exposed naked and friendless to the world, pretends to no other helps but the goodness of God, the piety of its principles, and the justness of its own cause, to maintain it; a church not born into the world with teeth and talons, like popery and presbytery, but like a lamb, innocent, and defenceless, and silent, not only under the shearer, but under the butcher too; a church which as it is obedient to the civil power, without any treacherous distinctions or reserves, so would be glad to have the countenance and protection of that power in return for her hearty obedience to it; though after all, if it cannot be protected by it, it is yet resolved to be peaceable and quiet under it, and while it parts with every thing else, to hold fast its integrity.

And now if almighty God should, for the nation's unworthy and ungrateful usage of so excellent a church, so pure and peaceable a religion, bereave us of it, by letting in upon us the tyranny and superstition of another, it is pity but it should come in its full force and power; and then, I hope, that such as have betrayed and enslaved their country, will consider that there is a temporal as well as an ecclesiastical interest concerned in the case, and that there are lands to be converted as well as heretics; and that those who pretend that they can with a word speaking change the substance of some things, can with as much ease alter the property of others. God's will be done in all things; but if popery ever comes in by English hands (as I see not how it can come in by any other), I doubt not but it will fully pay the scores of those who brought it in. But,

III. I come now to the third and last general thing at first proposed, which was to show, *what influence and efficacy a strict adherence to the constitutions of the church, and an absolute refusal to part with any of them, is like to have upon the settlement of the church, and the purity of the gospel amongst us.* As for this, I shall show three ways, by which it tends effectually to procure such a settlement. As,

1. By being the grand and most sovereign means to cause and preserve unity in the church. The psalmist mentions this as one of the noblest and greatest excellencies of the Jewish church, Psalm cxxii. 3, that it was "built as a city which is at unity in itself." Unity gives strength, and strength duration. The papists abroad frequently tell the English, that if we could but once be united amongst ourselves, we should be a formidable church indeed. And for this reason, there was none whom they so mortally hated (I speak upon certain information) as that late renowned archbishop and martyr, whose whole endeavour was to establish a settled uniformity in all the British churches; for his zeal and activity in

which glorious attempt, the presbyterians cut him off, according to the papists' hearts' desire.

Now a resolution to keep all the constitutions of the church, the parts of its service, and the conditions of its communion entire, without lopping off any one of them, must needs unite all the ministers and members of it; while it engages them, as the apostle so passionately exhorts the Corinthians, 2 Cor. i. 10, to "speak all the same thing." Not that I think that the apostle's meaning is, that all should speak the same thing in the very same words (though I cannot disprove this' neither, as to a considerable part of divine service); but this I affirm, that the using the same words (still allowing for the diversity of languages) is the readiest, the surest, and most effectual way to speak the same things, of any other way whatsoever: and it is sufficiently known, that the laws of this national church, by the liturgy it has provided and prescribed, enjoins the whole nation so to do. But on the contrary, if any one be indulged in the omission of the least thing there enjoined, they cannot be said to "speak all the same thing." In which case, besides the deformity of the thing itself, so much exploded by St. Paul in the whole fourteenth chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians, viz. that where the worship of God was the same, the manner of performing it should be with so much diversity, as the apostle there tells us it was; I say, besides the indecency of it, such a difference of practice, even in any Christian congregation, must and will certainly produce an irreconcilable division of minds; since the said diversity cannot be imagined to proceed from any thing else, but an opinion that one man understands and does his duty after a better and more spiritual manner than another; and consequently has got the start of his neighbour or fellow-minister, either in point of judgment or devotion; in neither of which is any man apt to give precedency to another, especially when it comes once to be contested: unity without uniformity being much like essence without existence; a mere word and a notion, and nowhere to be found in nature.

2. A strict adherence to the constitutions and orders of the church, is another way to settle it, by begetting in the church's enemies themselves an opinion of the requisiteness and fitness of those usages, for which they see the governors and ministers of the church (men of unexceptionable learning and integrity) so concerned, that they can by no means be brought to recede from them. Let factious biassed people pretend what they will outwardly, yet they cannot but reason the matter with themselves inwardly; that certainly there must be something more than ordinary in those things, which men of parts, judgment, and good lives so heartily contend for, and so tenaciously adhere to. For it is not natural to suppose, that serious men can or will be resolute for trifles, fight for straws, and encounter the fiercest

oppositions for such small things, as all the interests of piety, order, and religion, may be equally provided for, whether the church retains or parts with them. This certainly is unnatural, and morally impossible. And on the other side, let none think that the people will have any reverence for that, for which the pastors of the church themselves show an indifference.

And here let me utter a great but sad truth : a truth not so fit to be spoken, as to be sighed out by every true son and lover of the church, viz. that the wounds, which the church of England now bleeds by, she received "in the house of her friends" (if they may be called so), viz. her treacherous, undermining friends ; and that most of the nonconformity to her, and separation from her, together with a contempt of her excellent constitutions, have proceeded from nothing more, than from the false, partial, half-conformity of too many of her ministers. The surplice sometimes worn, and oftener laid aside ; the liturgy so read, and mangled in the reading, as if they were ashamed of it ; the divine service so curtailed, as if the people were to have but the tenths of it from the priest, for the tenths he had received from them. The clerical habit neglected by such in orders as frequently travel the road clothed like farmers or graziers, to the unspeakable shame and scandal of their profession ; the holy sacrament indecently and slovenly administered : the furniture of the altar abused and embezzled ; and the table of the Lord profaned. These and the like vile passages have made some schismatics, and confirmed others ; and in a word have made so many nonconformists to the church, by their conforming to their minister.

It was an observation and saying of a judicious prelate, that of all the sorts of enemies which our church had, there was none so deadly, so pernicious, and likely to prove so fatal to it, as the conforming puritan. It was a great truth, and not very many years after ratified by direful experience. For if you would have the conforming puritan described to you, as to what he is ;

He is one who lives by the altar, and turns his back upon it ; one who catches at the preferments of the church, but hates the discipline and orders of it ; one who practises conformity, as papists take oaths and tests, that is with an inward abhorrence of what he does for the present, and a resolution to act quite contrary when occasion serves ; one who, during his conformity, will be sure to be known by such a distinguishing badge, as shall point him out to, and secure his credit with, the dissenting brotherhood ; one who still declines reading the church service himself, leaving that work to curates or readers, thereby to keep up a profitable interest with thriving seditious tradesmen, and groaning, ignorant, but rich widows ; one who in the midst of his conformity thinks of a turn of state, which may draw on one in the church too ; and accordingly is very careful to behave himself so, as not to overshoot his game, but to stand right and fair in case a wished-for change should bring fanati-

cism again into fashion; which it is more than possible that he secretly desires, and does the utmost he can to promote and bring about.

These, and the like, are the principles which act and govern the conforming puritan; who, in a word, is nothing else but ambition, avarice, and hypocrisy, serving all the real interests of schism and faction in the church's livery. And therefore if there be any one who has the front to own himself a minister of our church, to whom the foregoing character may be justly applied (as I fear there are but too many), howsoever such a one may for some time soothe up and flatter himself in his detestable dissimulation; yet when he shall hear of such and such of his neighbours, his parishioners, or acquaintance, gone over from the church to conventicles, of several turned quakers, and of others fallen off to popery; and lastly, when the noise of those national dangers and disturbances, which are every day threatening us, shall ring about his ears, let him then lay his hand upon his false heart, and with all seriousness of remorse accusing himself to God and his own conscience, say, I am the person, who by my conforming by halves, and by my treacherous prevaricating with the duty of my profession, so sacredly promised and so solemnly sworn to, have brought a reproach upon the purest and best constituted church in the Christian world; it is I, who by slighting and slumbering over her holy service and sacraments, have scandalized and cast a stumblingblock before all the neighbourhood, to the great danger of their souls; I who have been the occasion of this man's faction, that man's quakerism, and another's popery; and thereby, to the utmost of my power, contributed to those dismal convulsions, which have so terribly shaken and weakened both church and state. Let such a mocker of God and man, I say, take his share of all this horrid guilt; for both heaven and earth will lay it at his door, as the general result of his actions; it is all absolutely his own, and will stick faster and closer to him, than to be thrown off and laid aside by him, as easily as his surplice.

3. And lastly, a strict adherence to the rules of the church, without yielding to any abatements in favour of our separatists, is the way to settle and establish it, by possessing its enemies with an awful esteem of the conscience and constancy of the governors and ministers of it. For if the things under debate be given up to the adversary, it must be upon one of these two accounts; either, 1. That the persons who thus yield them up judge them unfit to be retained; or, 2. That they find themselves unable to retain them; one or both of these must of necessity be implied in such a yieldance. If the first, then will our dissenters cry out, where has been the conscience of our church governors for so many years, in imposing and insisting upon those things which they themselves do acknowledge and confess

not fit to be insisted upon? And is not this at once to own all the libellous charges and invectives which our nonconformists have been so long pursuing our church with? Is not this to fling dirt upon the government of it ever since the reformation? Nay, and does not the same dirt light upon the reformers themselves, who first put the church into the order it is in at present, and died for it when they had done? Such therefore as are disposed to humour these dissenters, by giving up any of the constitutions of our church, should do well to consider, what and how much is imported by such an act; and this they shall find to be no less than a tacit acknowledgment of the truth and justice of all those pleas, by which our adversaries have been contending for such a yieldance to them all along. The truth is, it will do a great deal towards the removal of the charge of schism from their own door to ours, by representing the grounds of their separation from us hitherto lawful at the least. For the whole state of the matter between us lies in a very narrow compass, viz. that either the church of England enjoins something unlawful, as the condition of her communion, and then she is schismatical; or there is no unlawful thing thus enjoined by her, and then those who separate from her are and must be the schismatics; and till they prove that the church of England requires of such as do or would communicate with her, either the belief or the profession of something false, or the practice of something impious or immoral, it will be impossible to prove the unlawfulness of those things which she has made the conditions of her communion; and consequently to free those who separate from her from the charge of schism. Now so long as this is the persuasion of the governors of our church concerning these things, the world cannot but look upon them in their immoveable adherence to them, as acting like men of conscience, and, which is next to it, like men of courage. The reputation of which two great qualities in our bishops will do more to the daunting of the church's enemies, than all their concessions can do to the gaining them, for that is impossible. In the mean time, courage awes an enemy, and, backed with conscience, confounds him. He who having the law on his side, and justice too (for they are not always the same), resolves not to yield, takes the directest way to be yielded to; for where an enemy sees resolution he supposes strength, and upon trial generally finds it; but to yield is to confess weakness, and consequently to embolden opposition. And I believe it will be one day found, that nothing has contributed more to make the dissenting nonconforming party considerable, than their being thought so. It has been our courting them, and treating with them, which has made them stand upon their own terms, instead of coming over to ours.

And here I shall shut up this consideration with one remark:

and it is about the council of Trent; the design of calling which council, in all the princes who were at all for the calling one, was to humble and reduce the power of the papacy: and great and fierce opposition was made against that power all along by the prelates and ambassadors of those princes: but so far were they from prevailing, that the papacy weathered out the storm, and fixed itself deeper and stronger than ever it was before. But what method did it take thus to settle itself? Why, in a word, no other but a positive resolution not to yield or part with any thing, nor to give way either to the importunity or plausible exceptions, nor, which is yet more, to the power of those princes. So that, as the renowned writer of the history of that council observes, notwithstanding all those violent blusters and assaults made on every side against the papal power, "yet in the end," I give you the very words of the historian, "the patience and resolution of the legates overcame all."

Now what may we gather from hence? Why, surely, this very naturally; that if courage and resolution could be of such force as to support a bad cause, it cannot be of less to maintain and carry on a good one; and if it could thus long prop up a rotten building, which has no foundation, why may it not only strengthen, but even perpetuate that which has so firm a one as the church of England now stands upon?

And here to sum up all: could St. Paul find it necessary to take such a course with those erroneous judaizing dissenters in the church of Galatia, as "not to give place to them, no, not for an hour?" and is it not more necessary for us, where the pretences for the schism are less plausible, and the persons likely to be perverted by it much more numerous? Let us therefore, by way of close, briefly recapitulate and lay together the fore-alleged reasons and arguments, why we should by all means deal with our separatists and dissenters as St. Paul (a most authentic example) did with those judaizing hybrid Christians, viz. not give place to them at all. And that because,

1. By our yielding or giving place to them, we have no rational ground to conclude that we shall gain them, but rather encourage them to encroach upon us by further demands; forasmuch as the experience of all governments has found concessions so far from quieting dissenters, that they have only animated them to greater and fiercer contentions.

2. By our yielding or giving place to them, we make the established laws, in which these men can neither prove injustice nor inexperience, submit to them, who in duty, reason, and conscience, ought to obey and submit to those laws.

3. By our yielding or giving place to them, we grant that to those who, being themselves in power, never thought it reasonable to grant the same to others in the like case.

4. By our yielding or giving place to them, we bring a per-

nicious incurable schism into the church, if it be by a comprehension; though it is hoped that the wisdom of the government will prevent the equal danger which some fear from an unlimited toleration.

5. By our yielding to these men in a way of comprehension, we bring such men into the church as once destroyed and pulled it down, as unlawful and antichristian, and never yet renounced those principles upon which they did so, nor (as it is rationally to be thought) will.

6. By such a comprehension we endeavour to satisfy those persons, who could never yet agree amongst themselves about any one thing or constitution, in which they would all rest satisfied.

7. By indulging them this way, we act partially, in gratifying one sect, who can pretend to no more favour than what others may as justly claim who are not comprehended; and withal imprudently, by indulging one party, who will do us no good, to the exasperation of many more, who have a greater power to do us hurt.

8. By such a concession we sacrifice the constitutions of our church to the will and humour of those whom the church has no need of; neither their abilities, parts, piety, interest, nor any thing else belonging to them, considered.

9. And lastly, by such a course we open the mouths of the Romish party against us; who will be still reproaching us for going off from their church to a constitution which we ourselves now think fit to relinquish and surrender up, by altering her discipline and the terms of her communion; and may justly ask of us, where, and in what kind of church constitution, we intend finally to fix?

These, I say, amongst many more that might be named, are the reasons why we contend that our dissenters are by no means to be given place to in the least. And after all, may not this concluding question be likewise asked, viz. Whether, supposing that this yielding or giving up the things so long and earnestly disputed both for and against amongst us had been done in a parliamentary way, and seconded by the clergy's own solemn act and deed in solemn convocation, it would be now imagined by any one of solid sense, reason, and experience, that the church of England should ever have seen the same rites, rules, and constitutions restored to it again; nay, even at that grand and glorious restoration of king Charles II. and of the whole nation with him in the year sixteen hundred and sixty? No certainly, no; and I, for my own part, neither do nor can believe it; and let any one else (of a faith less than able to remove mountains) believe it, if he can.

And therefore what remains now, but that we implore the continued protection of the Almighty upon a church by such a

miracle restored to us, and (all things considered) by no less a miracle hitherto preserved amongst us, powerfully to defeat her enemies, and increase her friends, and so settle her upon the best and surest foundation of purity, peace, and order, that neither the gates of hell, nor all the arts of those within them, may ever prevail against her.

Which he, the most sovereign Lord and patron of our church, and defender of our faith, of his infinite goodness effect. To whom be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

TO

THE RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,

GEORGE,

BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE,

LORD BISHOP OF BATH AND WELLS.*

MY LORD,

Should I but so much as think of any other countenance or patronage to these following papers (as poor and as mean as they are) from one either of other or lower principles than your Lordship, it would instead of a becoming and due address, prove a direct affront to your honour.

My Lord, your Lordship was bred in two of the most eminent seminaries for loyalty and learning perhaps in Europe, viz. in the King's School at Westminster, and in that noble college of Christ-Church in Oxford; in each of which you grew up not barely as in a school or college, but as in your proper, genuine, and connatural element, and accordingly took and drank in thoroughly from thence all that they were remarkable and great for: and they, my Lord, in requital have made your Lordship what you now so deservedly are, and what all so unanimously accounted your Lordship to be.

But, my Lord, it is time for me in modesty (and to spare your Lordship's, as well as to show my own) to withdraw, and calmly and silently contenting myself with the naked contemplation and admiration of your Lordship's superlative worth and virtues (being utterly unable to reach the very lowest pitch of them by the best and highest of my expressions), I must with the utmost deference (the only height which I would aspire to) sincerely own, avow, and both with hand and heart subscribe myself,

My Lord,

Your Honour's ever faithful,

humble, and obedient Servant,

ROBERT SOUTH.

* This Dedication refers to the twelve sermons next following.

SERMON XXIX.

PART I.

THE FATAL INFLUENCE OF WORDS AND NAMES FALSELY APPLIED.

[Showing the first grand instance of the fatal influence of words and names falsely applied, in the late subversion of the church of England by the malicious calumnies of the fanatic party, charging her with popery and superstition.]

ISAIAH V. 20.*

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil, &c.

I FORMERLY made an entrance upon this text in a discourse by itself; and after some short explication of the terms, and something premised by way of introduction to the main design and further drift of the words, I cast the whole prosecution of them under these three heads.

First, To give some general account of the nature of good and evil, and of the reason upon which they are founded.

Secondly, To show that the way by which good and evil commonly operate upon the mind of man, is by those respective names and appellations by which they are notified and conveyed to the mind.

Thirdly, To show the mischief which directly, naturally, and unavoidably follows from the misapplication and confusion of these names.

These three things, I say, I prosecuted and despatched in my first and general discourse upon this text and subject: and in this my second and following discourses upon the same, I shall endeavour to assign the several instances, in which the mischievous effects then mentioned do actually show themselves, and by sad experience, are but too commonly found and felt in most of the affairs of human life. And here we are to strike out into a very large field indeed; for could all of them be recounted in their utmost compass and comprehension, they would spread as far and wide as even the world itself, and grasp in the concerns of all mankind put together. For is it not the first and most universal voice of human nature, "Who will show us any good?" and the next to it, "Who shall deliver us from evil?" Is it not the sole project and business of all the powers and faculties both

* The first sermon upon this text is in vol. i. page 334.

of soul and body, how to procure us those things that may help, and to ward off those that may hurt us? Is it not the great end of a rational being to compass and acquire to itself the happiness of this world by what it enjoys, and to secure to itself the enjoyment of the next world by what it does? And is there any third thing alleageable in which a man can be concerned, besides what he is to do and to enjoy? and must not the adequate object of both these be good?

But then, as the shadow still attends the body, so there is no one thing, relating either to the actions or enjoyments of man, in which he is not liable to deception; no good, but what, looking upon its dark side, he may misjudge to be evil; and no evil, but what, by a false light, he may imagine to be good: the consequence of which will be sure to reach him by an effect as good or evil as its cause. So that the subject here before us is as large as good and evil, as comprehensive as right judgment and mistake, and the effects of both are as infinite, numberless, and inconceivable, as all the particular ways and means by which a man is capable of being deceived and made miserable.

But since to rest here, and take up only in universals, would be useless and unprofitable; as, on the other side, to reckon up all particulars would be endless and impossible, we will endeavour to reduce the forementioned fatal effects of the misapplication of those great governing names of good and evil to certain heads, and those such as shall take in the principal things which the happiness or misery of human societies depends upon; which I conceive to be these three.

1st, Religion. 2dly, Civil government. And, 3rdly, The private interests of particular persons.

In all which, if we find the scene of these unhappy effects no where so full and lively set forth as here amongst ourselves, I hope, as the truth will be altogether as great, as if drawn from all the kingdoms and nations round about us; so the edification will be greater, by how much the concern is nearer, and the application more particular.

I. And first *for religion*. Religion is certainly in itself the best thing in the world; and it is as certain, that as it has been managed by some, it has had the worst effects: such being the nature, or rather the fate of the best things, to be transcendently the worst upon corruption. Forasmuch as the operative strength of a thing may continue the same, when the quality that should direct the operation is changed; as a man may have as strong an arm and as sharp a sword to fight with in a bad cause as in a good. And surely a sadder consideration can hardly enter into the heart of man, than that religion, the great means appointed by God himself for the saving of souls, should be so often made by men as efficacious an instrument of their destruction.

Now the direful and mischievous effects of calling good evil, and evil good, both with respect to the general interest of religion, and to the particular state of it amongst ourselves, will appear from these following instances.

1. Some men's villanous and malicious calling of the religion of the church of England, popery.

2. Their calling such as have schismatically deserted its communion, true protestants.

3. Their calling the late subversion of the church, and the whole government of it, reformation.

4. Their calling the execution of the laws in behalf of the church, persecution.

5. And lastly, their calling a betraying of the constitutions of the church by base compliances and half-conformity, moderation.

In all which you have the shallow, brutish, unthinking multitude worded out of their religion by the worst and most detested appellations fastened upon the best of things, and the best and most plausible names applied to the very worst.

And this I shall demonstrate, by going over every one of these as distinctly and as briefly as I can.

1. And first for that masterpiece of falsehood and impudence, their calling and traducing the reformed, primitive, and apostolical religion of the church of England by the name of *popery*, an application of the word *popery* more irrational and absurd, if possible than the thing itself. But what do I talk of the thing itself? when scarce one in five thousand of the loudest and fiercest exclaimers against popery, knows so much as what popery means. Only that it is a certain word made up of six letters, that has been ringing in their ears ever since their infancy, and that strangely inflames, and transports, and sets them a madding they know not why nor wherefore. A word that sounds big and high in the mouths of carmen, broommen, scavengers, and watermen, on a 5th or 17th of November, when extortion and perjury, in place and power think fit to authorize and let loose the rabble to try what metal the government is made of, under a plausible pretence of burning the pope, together with a fair intimation of what they long to be doing to some others, whom they hate much worse. Concerning which, by the way, I think that there never was so great a compliment passed upon the pope in this kingdom, since the reformation, as when the pope's picture and our Saviour's picture were so frequently burnt by the same hands and upon the same account. We very well know the design of these men in both, but cannot so well tell how they will be able to excuse either the sedition of the one, or the scandal of the other; though as for the pope, I dare undertake, that all the hurt that the fellows either can or will do him, shall never reach him any further than in his picture.

But to return to the charge of popery made against the church

of England. It is certainly the most frontless, barefaced lie, and the most senseless calumny, that ever was dictated by the father of lies, or uttered by any of his sons. And I could wish myself but as sure of my own salvation, as I am that those wretches stand condemned in their own hearts and consciences while they are charging this upon us. Nevertheless, since the world is witness that they have made the charge, and thereby drawn and abused a great part of these kingdoms into a cursed, soul-ruining schism, let us take an estimate of the villany of it by these two considerations.

1st. Of the mind and carriage of the church of Rome, both towards the beginners and the supporters of the reformation of the church of England.

2ndly. Of the several articles of the Romish belief, compared with the belief owned and professed by our church.

And I hope by these two we shall be able to discover what is popery, and what is not.

1st. And first for the behaviour or carriage of the church of Rome towards us. Surely had she taken us either for her sons or her friends, she would not have used us as she has done. For she is too wise to think to support her kingdom by dividing against herself. And as the apostle assures us, that "no man hateth his own flesh," so neither does any church anathematize, curse, burn, and destroy its faithfulest and most beloved members. Fire and faggot, racks and gibbets, are but a strange sort of love tokens, yet such as the church of Rome has still followed the English reformers with. We stand excommunicated by her as heretics and schismatics, and there has not a minute passed since the reformation in which she has not been endeavouring our destruction. The authors and compilers of our liturgy and book of homilies, paid down their lives for these books at the stake; and will the virulent, unconscionable fanatics charge and reproach these books as popish, when the makers and assertors of them were butchered by the papists for their being so? The fanatics burnt the books, and the papists burnt the authors. By the former I hope you will take notice how much the fanatics abhor popery; and by the latter how much the papists love us. Love indeed is usually compared to a fire, but I never yet knew that the party beloved was consumed by it. The papists would burn us for being protestants, and the fanatics would cut our throats for being papists. And now if you would learn from hence which of the two we really are, I suppose, when you consider the judging abilities of both parties, you will easily allow the papists to understand what they do and say much better than the fanatics. But let us now,

2ndly. In the next place consider the several articles of the Romish belief, as compared with the belief owned and professed by our church. And here,

(1.) First of all, Does the church of England own that prime and leading article of all popery, the pope's supremacy, an article so essential to the grandeur of the papacy, that without it the pope himself would not care a rush for all the rest? No, the very corner-stone of the English reformation was laid in an utter denial and disavowance of this point, for which our kings have lain under the papal curse, and the kingdoms been exposed to the ambition and rage of foreigners. And as we begun, so we have continued the reformation, by placing the English crown and the English church-supremacy upon the same head: and it is much, if our oath of supremacy to the king should consist with an allegiance to the pope, such as the sottish, senseless fanatics are still charging us with.

(2.) In the second place; Do we of the church of England admit of the pope's infallibility? No we look upon it as a sacrilegious invasion of an attribute too great and high for any but God himself. And so far are we from looking upon him as infallible, that we do not own him so much as a judge appointed by Christ to receive the last appeals of the catholic church in matters of faith, discipline, or any thing else; and we are as little concerned whether he makes his decrees and pronounces his decisions *in cathedrâ* or *extra cathedram*; as no man has any other or better thoughts of a fox while he is in his hole than when he is out of it.

(3.) In the third place; Does the church of England own a transubstantiation of the elements in the sacrament into the natural body and blood of Christ, all the accidents of those elements continuing still the same? No, she rejects it as the greatest defiance of reason, and depravation of religion, that ever was obtruded upon the belief and consciences of men, and as a paradox, that by destroying the judgment of some about sensible objects, undermines the very belief of the gospel, and the certainty of faith itself, the object of which must be first taken in by sense; and withal as a direct cause of the greatest impiety in practice, which is idolatry, and that of the very worst and meanest kind, in giving divine worship to a piece of bread, a thing so infinitely contrary to all the principles that the mind of man is capable of judging by, that if it could be made appear that the gospel did really affirm and declare this article in the very same sense in which the church of Rome holds it since the fourth Lateran council under Innocent III., I should be so far from believing it therefore, that I should look upon it as a sufficient reason for any rational man to demur to the divine authority of the gospel itself. For nothing can come from God that involves in it a contradiction. But as to this matter, our church has sufficiently declared her sense, both in her articles and in her liturgy.

(4.) In the fourth place; Does the church of England hold the

divine authority of unwritten traditions, equal to that of the scriptures, or written word of God, making them together with, and as much as the scriptures, part of the rule of faith? The church of Rome, in the council of Trent, positively and expressly affirms this. But the church of England explodes it as an insufferable derogation from the perfection of the holy scriptures; and withal, as a wide and open door, through which the church of Rome has let in so many superstitious fopperies and groundless innovations into religion, and through which (claiming as she does, the sole power of declaring traditions) she may, as her occasions serve, let in as many more as she pleases.

5. In the fifth place; Does the church of England hold auricular or private confession to the priest, as an integral part of repentance, and necessary condition of absolution? No; the church of England denies such confession to be necessary; either *necessitate præcepti*, as enjoined by any law or command of God; or *necessitate mediæ*, as a necessary means of pardon or remission of sins: and consequently rejects it as a snare and a burden groundlessly and tyrannically imposed upon the church; and too often and easily abused in the Romish communion to the basest and most flagitious purposes.

But so much of private confession, as may be of spiritual use for the disburdening of a troubled conscience, unable of itself to master or grapple with its own doubts, by imparting them to some knowing, discreet, spiritual person for his advice, and resolution about them; so much I confess the church of England does approve, advise, and allow of. I say, it does advise it, and that as a sovereign expedient, proper in the nature and reason of the thing, for the satisfaction of persons otherwise unable to satisfy themselves, but by no means does it as a duty equally and universally required of all.

(6.) In the sixth place; Does the church of England hold purgatory, together with its appendant doctrine of the pope's power to release souls out of it, and without which the pope would be little or nothing concerned for it? No, our church rejects it as a fable, and has quite put out this fire, by withdrawing the fuel that only can keep it alive; to wit, the doctrine of venial sins, with that other of merit, and of works of supererogation.

(7.) In the seventh and last place: Does the church of England, either by its belief or practice, own that article about the invocation of saints, and the addressing our prayers immediately to them, that so by their mediation they may be tendered and made acceptable to God? No, our church cashiers the whole article, as contumelious to, and inconsistent with the infinitely perfect mediatorship and intercession of Christ, so fully declared in 1 Tim. ii. 5, "There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus;" a mediator too great to need either deputies or co-partners in the discharge of that

high office. Besides, that such addresses or prayers to the saints cannot possibly be made by us in faith (which yet without faith cannot possibly please God), since we have no assurance that they hear those prayers, or have any certain or distinct knowledge of what particularly occurs and falls out here below; though indeed a general knowledge of the common constant concerns of the church, by reason of their having lived in the world, ought with great reason to be allowed them. But that is not sufficient to warrant a rational invocation of them upon our personal and particular occasions, since a particular knowledge of these can by no means be inferred or argued from a general knowledge of the other.

And thus I have gone over seven notable branches of the Romish faith, and there are many more of the like nature belonging to the same rotten stock; but these I am sure are the principal, it being impossible for a man to be a papist without holding these, or to hold these without being a papist. But now which of all these do our learned mouthing friends of the fanatic party prove to be held by our popish church of England, as they call it? I confess my thus going over these particulars in our church's vindication, cannot but have been a needless trouble to most of my hearers, as well as to myself; it being but little better than bringing so many arguments to prove that it is not midnight, while the sun shines full in a man's face. But being to deal with the height of impudence and ignorance in conjunction, and with a sort of men who abound with ignoramuses in the trial of spiritual, as well as temporal matters, I thought fit for their sake to come to particulars, and by a kind of inductive demonstration, to prove to their wonderful and profound understandings, that two and two do not make six; and that what contradicts, overthrows, and destroys every article of popery, is not, cannot be popery. No; though the whole faction should, with a *nemine contradicente*, vote it to be so.

And perhaps those wretches never did real popery so great a service, nor gave their popish plot so mortal a wound, as when tripping up the heels of their own narratives, by the advice of some half-witted Ahitophels, they began to stretch the imputation of popery even to the church of England too, calling all of its communion papists in masquerade. But thanks be to God, that the mask they provided for us has pretty well taken off the mask from themselves, and that their wisdom has not been altogether so great as their malice; for it is manifest that they have not acted as the wisest men in the world, the merciful and good providence of God very frequently ordering things so, that in great villainies there is often such a mixture of the fool, as quite spoils the whole project of the knave.

In the mean time, let popery be as bad as any one would have it, yet for all that let us not be deceived with words. We are

men, and let us not sell our lives and our estates, our reason and religion, for wind and noise. For where the thing exclaimed against is extremely bad, yet if the persons that exclaim against it are certainly much worse, worse in their principles, worse in their practices, you may rest assured that there is roguery at the bottom; and that how plausibly soever things may pass as they are heard, they would look very scurvily if they were seen. Something, no doubt, is designed that is not declared, but what that is I will not presume to determine from an inspection of men's hearts: only it having been always accounted a very rational and allowed way to judge what may be, by what has been; you may remember, that about forty years since this word popery served such as brandish it about the ears of the government now, as an effectual engine to pull down the monarchy to the ground, to destroy episcopacy root and branch, and to rob the church, and almost all honest men, to the last farthing. From which it appears to be a very easy, natural, and hardly to be avoided inference, that the very same means, used by the very same sort of men, are and must be intended to compass and bring about the very same ends once again. And if so, it is left to you to consider, whether it can become sober and wise men (especially in such great concerns) to be deceived by the same cheat. And thus I have given you both the short and the long, the top and the bottom, of all these enormous outcries against popery, together with an account how the church of England comes to be part of the church of Rome, while it stands excommunicated by it, and actually cut off from it.

2. And now in the second place to show, that the men whom we have been dealing with are no less artists in calling evil good, than in surnaming good evil; as they have imposed the name of papists upon us, so they have bestowed that of *true protestants* upon themselves; both of them certainly with equal truth and propriety. But they must not think to carry it off so: for how popular and plausible soever the name of protestant may sound, it is not that which can or will credit or commend fanaticism; but fanaticism will be sure to embase and discredit that. For names neither do nor can alter things, but ill things will in the issue certainly foul and disgrace the best names. But are these men (who have thus dubbed themselves true protestants) in good earnest such mortal enemies to popery and the popish interest, as they pretend themselves to be? If they are, they will do well to satisfy many wise and considering men in the world about some things that they cannot so well satisfy themselves in, nor reconcile the reality of such pretences to.

(1.) As first, how came the old puritans and fanatics all on the sudden to be so more than ordinarily troublesome to the government, when the Spanish armada in eighty-eight, breathing nothing but popery and destruction to England, was hover-

ing over our coasts, ready to grasp us as a certain prey? And in like manner, how came they to grow so extremely crank and confident, and importune both upon church and state, just before and about the time of the powder-treason? Both which remarkable passages, with some more of the like nature, have been particularly taken notice of by such as have written of the affairs of those times. Now that while the papists were attacking the government on the one side, the puritans should fall upon it on the other, and that both these parties should so exactly keep time together in troubling it, if there were not something of peculiar harmony, or rather a kind of unison correspondence between them, requires, in my poor judgment, a more than ordinary reach of understanding to conceive.

(2.) If the papists and the fanatics are really so opposite to one another, how came it to pass that while they sat together in parliament, they constantly also voted together in all things that might tend to the weakening and undermining of our church? Both of them, with one heart and voice, promoting indulgences and comprehensions, and such other arts and methods of destroying us. So that in all such cases our church was sure to find an equally spiteful attack from both sides.

(3.) If these two parties are so extremely contrary as they pretend to be, what is the cause now-a-days that none associate, accompany, and visit one another with that peculiar friendliness, intimacy, and familiarity, with which the Romanists visit the nonconformists, and the nonconformists them? So that it is generally observed in the country, that none are so gracious and so sweet upon one another as the rankest papists and the most noted fanatics: of which I will not pretend to know the reason, though I doubt not but they do.

(4.) I would gladly know, what can be alleged why the papists never write against the nonconformists; though they are never so much reviled, and sometimes written against by them, unless it be, that the papists know their friends under any disguise, and can easily pardon a few rude words spoken against them, in consideration of many real services done for them? However, their great silence towards them in such cases must needs proceed from one of these two things, either from love or from contempt; if from the first, then it is evident that the papists look upon them as their friends; if from the latter, then they look upon them as very contemptible adversaries. And they are free, for me, to pass under which of these two characters they please.

(5.) If popery and fanaticism are so irreconcilable as our true protestants would bear us in hand that they are, how come we by that extraordinary discovery made by them of late years, that the late blessed king Charles I. was murdered by the papists? For all that visibly acted in that hellish tragedy, were that traitorous

packed remainder of the house of commons, together with their high court of justice, and the officers of their rebel army: the names of all which are known, and stand upon record. So that if the king was murdered by papists, it is evident that these men were the papists. For we all know who they were who cut off the king. And we are now at length beholden to the faction for telling us also what they were. However, it seems many were engaged in this murder under masks and vizards, besides the executioner.

These things I thought fit to remark to you; from which yet I will not positively affirm, that such as call themselves true protestants, are either indeed papists themselves, or by a very close confederacy united to them; I say, I will not positively affirm it; only the forementioned objections being all of them founded upon known matter of fact, I shall here leave these with them; and they may if they please, and can at their leisure, answer them.

In the meantime, there is one thing which I cannot but observe upon them, as very material, and fit to be laid in their dish for ever; which is this: that if any branch of the royal family has unhappily drank in any thing of the popish contagion, these who call themselves true protestants, are of all men breathing the most improper to decry, or so much as to open their mouths against any such person upon that account. For they must thank themselves for it, who forcibly plucked the children out of the bosom of the best father and the firmest protestant in the world, and sent them into foreign countries, there to converse with snares and traps, and to support their lives with the hazard of their faith, flying from such protestants for safety and shelter amongst the papists. A staggering consideration, let me tell you, to persons of such tender years.

But had that blessed prince been suffered to spin out the full thread of his innocent life in peace and prosperity, none had issued from his royal loins but what he himself would have tutored and bred up to such a knowledge of, and adherence to, the church of England, that it should not have been in the power of all the papists and Jesuits under heaven to have shaken them in their religion.

So that the great seducers were Cromwell and his fellow rebels, who, by banishing the royal family, cast them into the very jaws of popery and seduction, and not only led, but drove them into temptation. And now will these fellows plunge men over head and ears in a ditch, and then knock out their brains for having a spot upon their clothes? kindle a flame round about them, and then with tragical outcries reproach them for being singed? do all that they can, compassing even sea and land to make a proselyte to popery, and then strip him of his inheritance for being so? O the equity, reason, and humanity of a true

protestant fanatic zeal! much according to the devil's method, first to draw men to sin, and then to damn and destroy them for it.

Upon the whole matter, we are eternally bound to thank our good God for all of the royal family that have not been perverted to popery; and to thank the rebels and fanatics if any have. And so I leave these zealots to make good their claim to this new distinguishing title, and to prove themselves true protestants, if they can, without either truth or protestanism belonging to them.

3. A third misapplied word, by which these men have done no small mischief to religion, is, their calling the late sacrilegious subversion of the discipline, orders, and whole frame of our church, by the name of *reformation*; a word which (as taking as it is to the ear) has yet some years since raised such a war in the state, and caused such a schism in the church, as hardly any place or age can parallel; a word which has cost this kingdom above a hundred thousand lives, which has pulled down the sovereignty, levelled the nobility, and destroyed the hierarchy, and filling all with blood, rapine, and confusion, reformed the best of monarchies into an anarchy, and the happiest of islands into an Aceldama; and doubtless that must needs be a blessed seed that can thrive in no soil, till it be ploughed up with war and desolation, and watered with the blood of its inhabitants.

But if we will needs be at this reforming work once more, it will concern us to consider first what we are to reform from; but that is quickly answered, that the old plea must proceed upon the old pretence; and that we must reform from popery and superstition. But for this we have already shown, by going over the principal parts of popery, that not one of them all can be found in our church; and if so, where and how then shall we be furnished with popery for reformation-work? Why, I will tell you; there are certain lands and revenues which the church is yet possessed of, and that with as full right as any man does or can hold his temporal estate by, which an old surfeited avarice, not well able to gorge any more, either for shame or satiety, thought fit to leave remaining in the church still. And this is the popery that with men of a large and sanctified swallow we stand guilty of, and ought by all means to be reformed from. For with a certain sort of men there can be no such thing as a thorough reformation till the clergy are all clothed in primitive rags, and brought to lick salt at the end of their table, who think the crumbs that fall from it much too good for them. But thanks be to God it is not come to this pass yet, nor, till the government falls into such as grasped at it some years since (which God forbid), is it ever like to do.

Well, but if we are thus at a loss to find any thing like popery, besides the popery of church lands, for us to be reformed from; let us in the next place consider who are to be our

reformers. And for this, such as appear foremost and cry loudest for reformation, are a sort of men greatly branded with the infamous note of atheism and irreligion, debauchery and sensuality, lust and uncleanness; so that although we cannot see what we are to be reformed from, yet we may fairly perceive what we are like to be reformed to. A reformation proceeding in such hands being in all probability likely to prove much after the same rate, as if upon those disorders and abuses mentioned to have been in the church of Corinth, St. Paul should of all others have singled out and written to the incestuous Corinthian to reform them.

But to give you a remarkable instance of what kind of sense of religion these reformers of it have had from first to last:—when that reproach and scandal to Christianity, Hugh Peters, held a discourse with the arch-rebel his master upon the mutinying of the army about St. Albans, and things then seemed to be in a scurvy doubtful posture, this wretch encouraged him not to be dismayed with the discontents of the soldiery, but accosting them resolutely to go on, as he had done all along, and to “fox them a little more with religion,” and no doubt he should be able to carry his point at last. A blessed expression this, “Fox them with religion!” and fit to come from the mouth of a noted preacher of religion, and a prime reformer of it also; but however, very suitable to the person that uttered it, who died as he lived, with a stupified seared conscience, and went out of the world foxed with something else beside religion.

4. A fourth abused name or word by which the faction is every day practising upon the church, and the government of it, is, their miscalling the execution of the laws made in behalf of the church, *persecution*. Now since the ten persecutions of the primitive Christians by the heathen emperors, in the first ages of Christianity, the word persecution is deservedly become of a very odious and ill import. And therefore without any more ado, our fanatics (who are no small artists at disguising things with names which belong not to them) presently clap this vile word, like a fireship, upon the government and the laws, and doubt not by this to blow them up or burn them down in a little time. And indeed with the brutish rabble, who take words not as they signify, but as they sound, the artifice has gone very far, the great disturbers of the church by this sophistry passing for innocent, and the laws themselves being made the only malefactors.

But setting aside noise and partiality, I would gladly know why such as suffer capitally by the hand of justice at Tyburn, should not be as high and loud in their clamours against persecution as these men? If you say that those persons suffer for felony, but these for their conscience; I answer that there is as much reason for a man to plead conscience for the breach of one law, as for the breach of another, where the matter of the law is either good or

indifferent, and both one and the other stand enforced by sufficient authority.

And possibly the highwayman will tell you that he cannot in conscience suffer himself to starve; and that without taking a purse now and then he must starve, since "dig he cannot, and to beg he is ashamed." But now if you will look upon this as a very unsatisfactory plea to the judge, the jury, and the law, as no doubt it is a very insolent and a very senseless one; I am sure upon the same grounds all the pleas and apologies for the nonconformists (though made by some conformists themselves) are every whit as senseless and irrational.

But as to the plea of conscience, I shall only say this, that I will undertake to demonstrate to any one possessed of the least grain of sense and reason, that there neither is nor can be any such thing as government in the world, where the subject is allowed to plead his private conscience in bar of the execution of the laws. For if while the prince is to govern by law, the law is to be governed by the subject's conscience, wheresoever the name and title of sovereignty may be lodged, the power is undoubtedly in those who overrule the law.

And now if this pitiful sham and term of art, persecution, shall be able to screen those spiritual riots and seditious meetings, that look so terribly upon the government, from the justice of it, how can it possibly be safe? For the design of conventicles is not to worship God in another and a purer way (as they cant it), but to adjust the numbers, to learn the strength, and to fix the correspondence of the party, and thereby to prepare and muster them for a new rebellion; and the design of a rebellion is, for those that have not estates to serve themselves upon those that have. This is the sum total of the business. And thus much for this other trick that the faction would trump upon the government of the church, by loading the execution of its laws (which is the vital support of all governments) with the abhorred name of persecution. But now,

5. In the fifth and last place, let us come to the principal engine of all, which is their prosecuting the worst of designs against the best of churches, under the harmless gilded name of *moderation*, than which can any thing look milder, or sound better? For as justice is the support of government, so moderation and equity is the very beauty and ornament of justice itself. And what is all virtue but a moderation of excesses? a mean that keeps the balance of the soul even, neither suffering it to rise too high on one side, nor to fall too low on the other? And does not Solomon, the wisest of men, commend it, by condemning the contrary quality, in "being righteous over-much?" Eccles. vii. 16. And is not also one of the best of men, and one of the greatest of the apostles, St. Paul himself, alleged in praise of the same? Phil. iv. 5, "Let your moderation be known unto all

men." And possibly some bibles, of a later and more correct edition, may by this time have improved the text, by putting "trimming" into the margin. So that you see that there could not be a more plausible nor a more authentic word to gull and manage the rabble, and to carry on a design by, than this of *moderation*.

But have we never yet heard of a wolf in sheep's clothing? nor of a sort of men who can smile in your face while they are about to cut your throat? And for these fellows, who have all along hitherto handled our church with the hands of Esau, how come they now all on a sudden to bespeak it with the voice of Jacob? Certainly, therefore, there is something more than ordinary couched under this beloved word of theirs, *moderation*. And if you would have a true and short account of it, as by persecution they mean the execution of those laws that would suppress nonconformity; so by moderation they mean neither more nor less than the encouraging and supporting of nonconformity by the suppression of those laws. This is the thing which is meant and driven at by them.

But then you are still to understand, that this is to be done dexterously and decently, and in a creeping, whining, sanctified dialect, and such as may not too much alarm the government, by telling it plainly and roundly what they would be at; for that would be more haste than good speed. As for instance, to break in rudely and downright upon the church, and to cry out, "Away with your superstitious liturgy; we will have no stinting of the Spirit! Away with your popish canons; we are a free-born people, and must have our liberty, both as men and as Christians! Away with your gowns, hoods, and surplices, and other such rags and trumpery of the whore of Babylon! Down with bishops and archbishops, deans and chapters; we will have nothing of them but their lands! Repeal, abrogate, and take away all laws for conformity, and against conventicles, which are held as a rod over the good people of God, the sober, industrious, trading part of the nation." Now I say, though a *gracious heart* (as they call their own) is big with all and every one of these designs, yet it is not time nor prudence to cry out till there be strength to bring forth: and, therefore instead of all these boisterous assaults, the same thing is much better and more hopefully carried on in a lower strain, and a softer expression. As, "Pray use moderation, gentlemen. Moderation is the virtue of virtues. Moderation bids fair to be a mark of regeneration, it is a healing, uniting, protestant-reconciling grace; and, therefore, since by our good will we would neither obey the laws, nor suffer for disobeying them, be sure above all things that you use *moderation*." Well, the advice you see is good, especially for those that give it: but how is this to be done? Why thus: suppose one, in the first place, a church

governor, and that he comes to understand that such and such of his clergy exercise their ministry in a constant neglect of the rules, rites, and orders of the church? Why, with great prudence and gravity he is to take no notice of it. Is the surplice and the ecclesiastical habit laid aside? Why, still he is to practise the grace of connivance, and to wink hard at this too. Is the service of the church read brokenly, slovenly, imperfectly, and by halves? Why, he is to suffer this also, and to make no words of it. Does any one presume to preach doctrines quite contrary to some of the articles of the church? Why, in this case, if the preacher offends, the bishop is to silence only himself. And if at any time there happens a contest between a clergyman and some potent neighbour, about the rights and dues of his living, he is presently to cajole and side with that potent oppressing neighbour, and to snub and discountenance the poor clergyman for not suffering himself to be oppressed, defrauded, and undone quietly, and without complaint. And this is some (though not all) of that moderation, which some now-a-days require in a church governor, and which in due time cannot fail to have the very same effect upon the church, which the continual hewing and hacking at a tree must naturally have towards the felling it down.

Well, but in the next place we will suppose another man a justice of peace. And if so, let him not concern himself to lay this or that factious conventicle-preacher by the heels, as the law and his office require him to do. But if he must needs, for shame or fear, sometimes make a show, at least, of searching after this precious man, let him, however, send him timely notice thereof underhand, that so the justice may fairly and judiciously search for that which he is sure not to find; according to that of the poet, *Istud quæro, quod invenire nolo*. Moreover, if there chance to be a conventicle, or unlawful meeting, just under his nose, let him not disturb or break it up; for alas! those that are of it are a sort of peaceable well-meaning people, who meet only to serve God according to their consciences. Possibly, indeed, some of the chief of them may have fought their king heretofore at Edgehill, Marston Moor, Naseby, or Worcester; but that is past long since, and they are resolved never to do so again, till they are better able than at present (to their sorrow) they find themselves to be. And this is some of the moderation which is required to a magistrate or justice of peace, so called, I conceive, for sitting still, holding his peace, and doing nothing.

But then, lastly, if a parliament be sitting, oh! that above all others is the proper time for such as are men of sobriety and zeal, and understand the true interest of the nation, forsooth, to manifest a fellow-feeling of the sufferings of the brotherhood, and in behalf of their old puritan friends to pimp for bills of union, comprehension, or toleration. And this, you are to know,

is a principal branch of that moderation which has been practised by several worthy and grave men of the church of England, as they are pleased (little to the church's honour I am sure) to style themselves; and which is more, it was practised by them at a certain critical juncture of affairs not many years since, when a clergyman could hardly pass the city streets without being reviled, nay spit upon, as several, to my knowledge, actually were. And I hope, though we churchmen had been blind before, so much dirt and spittle so bestowed might (without a miracle) have opened our eyes then.

And now, when both sense and experience, as broad as daylight, has shown us what the party means by popery, what by true protestantism, and what by reformation, and the like; is this a time of day for any who profess and own themselves of the church of England, to play fast and loose, to trim it and trick it, and prevaricate with the church by new schemes and models, new amendments and abatements of its orders and discipline, in favour of a restless implacable faction, which breathes nothing less than its utter destruction? Has not the church of England cause, above all other churches in the world, to complain and cry out, "These are the wounds which I have received in the house of my friends? My constitution is undermined and weakened, my laws broken, my liturgy despised, my doctrines impugned, and a kind of new gospel brought in, and millions of souls drawn from my communion; and all this dishonour done me, not only by my open avowed enemies, but chiefly and most effectually by such as have subscribed my articles and canons, such as have eaten my bread, and have worn my preferments; these are the men who have brought me to this low, languishing, and consumptive condition, by their treacherous compliances, and their false expedients, while I was still calling for their help and support, by that which only under God could or can preserve me a strict, thorough, and impartial observation of my laws." For this I say, and will maintain, that the church of England, as to its external state and condition in this world, stands upon no other bottom, and can be upheld by no other methods, but a vigorous execution of her laws on the one side, and a constant, uniform, unreserved conformity to them on the other. And all other ways are but the palliated remedies and the fallacious prescriptions of quacks and mountebanks, and spiritual Pontæus's, such as wise men would never advise, nor good men approve of: and such as, by skinning over her wounds for the present (though probably not so much as that neither) will be sure to cure them into an after-rottenness and suppuration, and infallibly thereby at length procure her dissolution. And for my own part, I fully believe that this was the very thing designed by these men all along. For I dare aver, that if that one project of union, as it was laid, had

taken place, it would have done more to the breaking our church in pieces, and to the bringing in of popery by those breaches, than the papists themselves have been able to do towards it since the reformation. So that whatsoever the danger may have been to our church heretofore from church papists, I am sure the great danger that threatens it now is from church fanatics.

And thus I have at length done with the first grand instance of the three, in which the abuse and confusion of those great controlling names of *good* and *evil* has such a pernicious effect: and that is, in the business of religion, and the affairs of the church: and particularly as they stand here amongst ourselves, where both have infinitely suffered by the malicious artifice of a few misapplied words. But woe to those villanous artists by whom they have been so misapplied! Good had it been for the church of England, and perhaps for themselves too, that they had never been born; and may the great, the just, and the eternal God, judge between the church of England and those men who have charged it with popery; who have called the nearest and truest copy of primitive Christianity, superstition; and the most detestable instances of schism and sacrilege, reformation; and, in a word, done all that they could, both from pulpit and press, to divide, shatter, and confound the purest and most apostolically reformed church in the Christian world; and all this by the venomous giberish of a few paltry phrases instilled into the minds of the furious, whimsical, ungoverned multitude, who have ears to hear, without either heads or hearts to understand.

For I tell you again, that it was the treacherous cant and misapplication of those words, popery, superstition, reformation, tender conscience, persecution, moderation, and the like, as they have been used by a pack of designing hypocrites (who believed not one word of what they said, and laughed within themselves at all who did), that put this poor church into such a flame heretofore, as burnt it down to the ground; and will infallibly do the same to it again, if the providence of God and the prudence of man does not timely interpose between her and the villanous arts of such incendiaries. For we may and must pronounce of this vile cant, what a great and learned man said of common prophecies and predictions, usually vented and carried about to amuse the minds of the vulgar; to wit, that in point of any credence to be given to them, in respect of their truth or credibility, they are utterly to be despised and slighted: but in point of the influence they may have upon the public, by perverting the minds of the people, no caution can be too great to be used against them, no diligence too strict, no penalties too severe to discourage and suppress them. For even the silliest and most senseless things may sometimes conjure up more mischief to a government, than the wisest and ablest statesmen in the world can conjure down again.

And to give you one terrible instance, how far the minds of men are capable of being canted and seduced into the most violent and outrageous courses, as they are managed by some pulpit unpostors, you may all remember that the great engine of battery which broke and beat down our church, was the Scotch covenant. But how did it do this execution? Why, by those spiritual *boutefeus* calling this wretched thing, from the pulpit, to the deceived rabble, the covenant of God. And so strangely had they beaten this notion into their addle heads, that there was not one text in the whole book of God about the covenant between God and the Israelites, in which the brainless rout did not immediately, upon the bare clink of the words, conclude the Scotch covenant to be meant and pointed at thereby. Such were all the texts in which God calls upon the Israelites to keep his covenant; and all the texts in which he reproaches and expostulates with them for having broken and been false to his covenant. In all which the stupid schismatical herd, by the help of those hypocrites, those perverters of scripture and murderers of souls (if ever there were any such upon the face of the earth); I say, by the fraudulent and fallacious infusions of those seducers, the abused vulgar reckoned the Scotch covenant, by clear and irrefragable evidence of scripture, bound inviolably fast upon their consciences. And can any thing in nature be imagined more profane and impious, more absurd, and indeed romantic, than such a persuasion; and yet as impious and absurd as it was, it bore down all before it, and overturned the equallest and best framed government in the world. So that it was not for nothing that a sanctified dunce of the faction compared the covenant to the ark of God, brought into the temple of Dagon, and Dagon thereupon falling prostrate upon his face before it. For thus says he: "Nothing wicked or superstitious could stand before this other ark of God, the covenant, but presently upon the bringing of it into England, popery fell down before it, arbitrary power fell down before it, prelacy fell down and gave up the ghost at the feet of it." And why did not the man of allusion, while his head was hot and his hand was in, add also, that sense and reason, law and religion, justice and common honesty, and, in a word, all that was enjoined by God or approved by man, "fell down and gave up the ghost before it?" For it is certain, that wheresoever the very breath of the covenant came, it blasted and consumed all these.

And now, was it not high time, think you, to tie up the tongues of those seducers, who could arm mere cant and nonsense to such a formidable opposition to the government, as to make one despicable word, villanously misapplied, and sottishly misunderstood, a fatal besom of destruction, to sweep away all before it, civil or sacred, legal or established, both in church and state?

Certainly there can be no truly pious, or indeed so much as truly English heart, but must bleed when it looks back upon that abomination of desolation, which was seen in all our holy places in those days, and consider, both by whom all this was brought

upon them, and how. That the best and surest bulwark of protestantism, the glory of the reformation, and the express image of the purest antiquity, should be run down and laid in the dust by the meanest of cheats, managed by the worst of men. This has been done once, and God grant that we may never see it done again.

To which God, the great lover of truth, peace, and order in his church, be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore: Amen.

SERMON XXX.

PART II.

INSTANCES OF THE MISAPPLICATION OF THE WORDS GOOD AND EVIL.

[The second grand instance of the mischievous influence of words and names falsely applied, in the late overthrow of the English monarchy, compassed chiefly hereby, in the reign of king Charles I., and attempted again in the reign of king Charles II., being the third discourse on Isaiah v. 20.]

ISAIAH v. 20.

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil, &c.

I FORMERLY discoursed twice upon these words, the whole prosecution of which I cast under these four heads.

First, To give some general account of the nature of good and evil, and of the reason upon which they are founded.

Secondly, To show that the way by which good and evil commonly operate upon the mind of man, is by those respective names and appellations by which they are notified and conveyed to the mind.

Thirdly, To show the mischief which directly, naturally, and unavoidably follows from the misapplication and confusion of these names.

Fourthly, and lastly, To show the grand and principal instances in which the abuse or misapplication of those names has so fatal and pernicious an effect.

The first three of these I despatched in my first discourse, and in my second made some entrance upon the fourth, to wit, the assignation of those instances, &c. Concerning which I showed, that if we should consider them in their utmost compass and comprehension, they would carry as large a circumference as the world itself; and grasp in the concerns of all mankind put together; being in their full latitude as numberless, various, and inconceivable as all the particular ways and means by which men are capable of being miserable. And therefore, since to reckon up all particulars would be endless, and to rest only in universals would be equally fruitless; I choose to reduce the forementioned fatal effects of the misapplication of those great governing names of good and evil to certain heads, and those such as should take in the principal things which the happiness or misery of human societies depends upon.

Now those heads were three; 1st. Religion, and the concerns of the church. 2dly. Civil government. And, 3dly. The private interests of particular persons.

The first of which three, relating to religion and the church, I have fully treated of already in my last discourse, and shall now proceed to the

II. Which is, to show the direful and mischievous influence which the abuse or misapplication of those mighty operative names of good and evil has upon *civil government*, or the political state of the world.

In treating of which, I will not be so arrogant and impertinent as to presume to discourse of the rules and arts of government, or to prescribe to those whom I am called to obey; government being the greatest, the noblest, and most mysterious of all arts, and consequently very unfit for those to talk magisterially of, who never bore nor affected to bear any share in it.

For though some have had the face and confidence to be meddling with religion, and reforming the church, reversing her canons, and new-forming her liturgy, who were much fitter to have been learning their catechism at home, and dealing with their tenants in the country, if they had any; I say, though religion and divinity have the ill luck to be so meanly thought of, that every half-witted corporation blockhead thinks himself a competent judge of the deepest points of its doctrine, and the reason of its discipline, so as to be new-modelling of both at his insolent but senseless pleasure; yet the learning which qualifies for the pulpit teaches more sense and better manners.

But though it be above our sphere to teach the rules and arts of governing, and to direct those how to steer who sit at the helm; yet I am sure it is not above us to help and assist them in their government, by declaring the villany of those practices which would subvert it. Any one may kill wasps and hornets, and other vermin which infest a garden, without pretending to the skill and art of a gardener; and a watchman may do much towards the defence of a city, though he offers not to govern it. In like manner, for a preacher of the word to denounce the wrath of God against faction and sedition, and by all the spiritual artillery of the word (as I may so call it) to prosecute and run down those sins which both disturb government and destroy souls, cannot justly or properly be called his meddling with matters of state. And therefore, when some very gravely tell us that the sole or chief business of a preacher is to preach up a good life, and to preach down sin, I heartily assent to them; but withal must tell them, that I take obedience to government to be a principal part of a good life, and faction and rebellion to be some of the worst, the blackest, and most damning sins that men can be guilty of; and consequently, that it is the direct, unquestion-

able duty and business of a preacher with all imaginable zeal to testify against crimes of so high and clamorous a guilt, wheresoever he finds them; since the same divine commission which commands him to instruct, equally empowers him to reprove; and I know no privilege or condition under heaven which can warrant a man to sin without reproof or control. This indeed is the proper post in which every preacher and spiritual person ought to serve the government; and how much soever such men may be despised, I am sure no sort of men are able to serve or deserve it more; the infamous pulpits between the years forty and sixty having been but too convincing a demonstration of the one, and the loyal clergy ever since sixty as effectual a proof of the other.

This I thought fit to note briefly beforehand, to obviate that insolent objection of some irreconcilable haters of the ministry, who still call the preaching of obedience to government, the ripping up of faction and sedition, a meddling with matters of state; as I question not but St. Paul himself would have incurred the very same censure, from the same sort of persons, for what he says and teaches in the 13th chapter to the Romans, about the necessity of "every soul's being subject to the higher powers, and that there is no power but from God, and that such as resist shall receive to themselves damnation." Would not such as we have to deal with now-a-days have cried out against him, What ails this pragmatistical pulpiteer thus to talk of government and obedience? Shall he presume to teach the commons of Rome how to behave themselves to their prince? Does he understand their privileges, which pass all understanding but their own? Trounce him, gaol him, and bring him upon his knees, and declare him a reproach and scandal to his profession; that so he may learn for the future (as one wisely advised on the like occasion) "to preach and to say nothing." For what has he to do to lay the law of subjection and loyalty to the free-born people of Rome, when, for reasons of state, the wisdom of the nation shall think fit to take their prince by the throat with one hand, and to wrest his sceptre from him with the other?

Nor is St. Paul the only troublesome person in this case, but we shall find that St. Peter also will needs be meddling with matters of state, 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14, 15, where he presses all, without exception, to "submit themselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him," &c., together with an earnest exhortation in five or six verses together to the now antiquated duty of passive obedience. For though the duty of patience and subjection, where men suffer wrongfully, might possibly be of some force in those times of primitive darkness and imperfection, yet in times of light and revelation those beggarly elements of loyalty and subjection vanish; and Buchanan's

modern and more improved Christianity teaches, that then only men are bound to suffer, when they are not able to resist. A worthy doctrine no doubt, and such as none but rebels were ever the better for, and none but such as love rebellion ever approved of.

But must not that government, think you, be all this time in a very hopeful case, where a company of popular demagogues are let loose to poison and inflame the minds of the people with the rankest principles of rebellion; and those whose proper office, duty, and calling is to teach and to inform, to undeceive and disabuse men, must not they in the behalf of the government warn them against such persons and principles as would debauch them from their allegiance, for fear of being loaded with the odious imputation of meddling with matters of state? No doubt that flock must needs be in a safe and good condition, where the shepherds must never cry out, nor the dogs bark, but when the wolves shall give them leave.

But I hope no clergyman of the church of England will ever debase and prostitute the dignity of his calling so far, as to want either courage or conscience to serve the government, by testifying against any daring, domineering faction which would disturb it, though never so much in favour with it; no man certainly deserving the protection of the government, who does not in his place contribute to the support of it; as on the other side, those who at their utmost peril have spoken, and others who have fought for the support of it, surely of all others have least cause to be discouraged or forsaken by it, howsoever it has sometimes happened otherwise.

And thus much by way of introduction to our main subject, which is to show how our old gamesters have been, and still would be playing the same game upon the state, which they had done upon the church, and that by the very same libellous disguise, and false representations of things and persons, blazoning out the worthiest men and the best actions under the foulest and most odious colours; and the vilest persons and the wickedest designs under the most popular and taking; one of the most pestilent ways certainly of calling good evil, and evil good, that the public can suffer by. For still the prime and most effectual engine to pull down any government, is to alienate the minds of the subjects from it; it being a never-failing observation, that when a governor comes to be generally hated, he is not many steps from being assuredly ruined. By which old, long practised, lying, diabolical artifice, as the worst of rebels mounted heretofore into the throne of the best of princes, so no doubt they hope to do the same again; and it is not long since that they bade fair for it.

Now those artificial words, by the misapplication and management of which, these overturners of all above them have done

such mighty execution, being much too many for a present rehearsal, as I formerly culled out five of the chief and most venomous, by which those wretches ruined and overthrew the ecclesiastical state amongst us; so I shall now pitch upon four of the principal, by which they did, and hope to do the same feat again upon the monarchy and civil government; it being the usual fate of that and the church to be supported and run down by the same methods.

I. The first is their traducing and exposing the mildest of governments and the best of monarchies by the odious name of arbitrary power.

II. Their blackening and misrepresenting the ablest friends and assistants of their prince in his government with the old infamous character of evil counsellors.

III. Their setting off and recommending the greatest enemies both of prince and people, under the plausible, endearing title of public spirits, patriots, and standers up for their country.

IV. And lastly, Their couching the most malicious, selfish, and ambitious designs, under the glorious cover of zeal for liberty and property, and the rights of the subject.

These four rattling words I say, arbitrary power, evil counsellors, public spirits, liberty, property, and the rights of the subject, with several more of the like noise and nature, used and applied by some state impostors (as scripture was once quoted by the devil), are the great and powerful tools by which the faction hope to do their business upon the government once more. For since (as I observed in the first discourse upon this subject) the generality of mankind are wholly governed by words and names, having neither strength of judgment to discern, nor leisure to inquire into the right application and drift of them; what can be expected, if a company of bold, crafty, designing villains, shall be incessantly buzzing into the rabble's ears, tyranny and arbitrary power, pensioners and evil counsellors, on the one hand; and pointing out themselves for the only patrons of their country, the only assertors of liberty and property, and redressers of grievances, on the other? I say, if the rout be still followed and plied by them with such mouth-granadoes as these, can any thing be expected, but that those who look no further than words, should take such incendiaries at their word; and thereupon presently kindle and flame out, and throw the whole frame of the government into tumult and confusion?

And therefore I shall go over every one of these rabble-charming words, which carry so much wildfire wrapped up in them, and lay open the true meaning and design of them as distinctly as in so short an exercise I can.

I. And first let us begin with the highest and loudest, and that which leads the van in all clamours against the government,

namely, that of *arbitrary power*, twin to that other great and noted one of popery, treated of by me heretofore; arbitrary power being of much the same import with reference to the state, that popery is with relation to the church: indeed they always go hand in hand, the cry of one still accompanying the other; and as it is hardly possible for a man to spit, but at the same time he must breathe too, so I believe hardly any foul mouth ever opened against the church, in the slander of popery, which did not likewise discharge itself against the monarchy, in the slander of arbitrary power.

But since there has been so much noise made of it, I think it may be no less than requisite for us to see and state what arbitrary power is: and in the true sense of it, it is a prince's or governor's ruling his people according to his own absolute will and pleasure, either without law or against it. Such a kind of power was that vested in the Roman emperors by the *lex regia*, that the sole will of the emperor should in all things obtain the force of a law. And such a one more properly is at this day the power of the Grand Signior, or Turkish emperor, and generally of all eastern princes. But when was such a power ever claimed by, or where does the least footstep of it appear in the very worst of our kings, who have reigned since the conquest? And therefore it is strange that it should be charged upon the very best.

For though every statute-law is the product of the king's will, it being the royal assent that properly enacts or stamps it a law, yet our kings have consented to such a limitation of the exercise of this their power, as to the matter of all laws, that they claim not now a power to make what laws they please; but still the matter of them, or the thing which is to receive that authorizing sanction from the royal hand, is first to be prepared and tendered to it, by the choice and consent of the subjects themselves, acting by their representatives. So that as the king has always a negative upon the sanction, so the subject has still a negative upon the matter of the law.

And can there be a greater privilege enjoyed by any subjects under heaven than to be the choosers of their own laws? Or did any of our princes, especially those of the present race, ever go about to ravish or extort it from them? And have not those laws been as free and uncontrolled in the execution, as they were benign and wholesome in the composition? And lastly, have not those laws, that have made the English government so easy, so equal, and so beneficial to the subject, even to the envy of all nations round about us, been the effects and issue of that princely goodness, which induced our kings to pass them into laws, and without which they could never have been laws; but after all would have remained a useless *caput mortuum*, without either life or force in them?

The truth is, we have been so governed for above these hundred years, that it is hard to decide whether the government or the governor has been the milder of the two. For as to the government itself, can any constitution in nature be imagined gentler, and further from the least shadow of oppression, than that in which, as to all matters of right, the subject stands upon the same ground with his prince, so as to be allowed legally to contest his right with him in his own courts, they being free and open; and judges appointed to umpire the matter in contest between them, and to decide where the right lies? And can there be any thing arbitrary or tyrannical, where justice has so free and uninterrupted a course; and where the king is understood neither to do, nor so much as to command any thing, but what he does or commands by his laws, and those such as, for the most part, are more in favour of the subject than of the prerogative?

And if so, can we imagine that any one in his wits, who designs to fight, would first suffer, or rather cause his own hands to be tied? Yet this is not a greater absurdity, than to suppose a prince setting up for arbitrary power, just after he himself had passed those laws which make the exercise of such a power, in a prince ruling by law, utterly impossible. And yet this was eminently the case of the two last kings, with reference to this slander cast upon them by the republican faction, after they had passed more laws to assure the right of the subject, and to the limiting the prerogative, than all their predecessors since the conquest had done before them. And so much was once acknowledged of king Charles I. by that very faction which ruined him, nay even while they were actually ruining him; and we know his son in such acts of grace rather outdid than came behind him. Indeed both of them parted with so much of their royal power and prerogative, to gratify and content their people, that many wise men have feared that the crown may have hardly enough left it in all cases to protect them. Which, should it be so, is the chief thing that looks like a grievance to the subject of any that I know; and if it be, they know whom they may thank for it; especially when those laws were made in the reign of two such princes, that though they had never been made, the very temper and disposition of the men had been a superabundant security to the subject against all their fears; princes who had nothing arbitrary or violent either in their nature or their family; princes of such an unparalleled clemency, that I dare confidently aver, that it was solely and wholly owing to their surpassing mildness, that there was so much as one wretch in all their dominions either able or willing to do them hurt.

But there cannot be a greater demonstration that there is no such thing as arbitrary power in this kingdom, than that men have been endured so commonly and so freely to charge the government with it. What a noise was there of arbitrary power

in the reign of the two last kings, and scarce any at all during the usurpation of Cromwell! Of which I know no reason in the world that can be given but this; namely, that under those two princes there was no such thing, and under Cromwell there was nothing else. For where arbitrary power is really and indeed used, men feel it, but dare not complain of it, for fear their complaints should be answered as the Egyptians answered those of the Israelites, by increasing their tasks and redoubling their burdens. And besides all this, what a hideous outcry was, not many years since, raised by an insolent, impudent company of men against arbitrary power, while themselves were practising it upon their fellow-subjects; and that at such a rate, as none of our kings ever so much as pretended to. And yet if ever it should so please God as to punish the nation with an arbitrary oppression for complaining of it when there was none, surely it would be much more tolerable to groan under the arbitrary will of a noble, royally descended monarch, than under the lawless will and tyranny of a pack of spiteful, mean, merciless, republicans; as without question it would be a much nobler death to be torn in pieces by a lion, than to be eaten up by lice.

And thus much for the first groundless, senseless, and shameless calumny upon the government, to wit, that of arbitrary power; a calumny which more than sufficiently contradicts and confutes itself by this one irrefragable argument; that any subject who has presumed to libel and reproach his prince with it, is seen alive and well, nay, rich and thriving, after he has done so. Of which sort of arguments this kingdom (it is well known) affords no small plenty and variety.

II. The next word of art and malice, by which the faction would undermine the government, is, *evil counsellors*. For sometimes it is not found either safe or so expedient for popular rage and rudeness to discharge itself immediately upon the person of the king himself, and therefore they choose to make their approaches more artificially, and first to attack those about him. But as in a siege the taking in the outworks is in order to the taking of the main fort at last; so faction never strikes at any of a prince's ministers, but with a design that the blow should go round, and reach him in the end. When the wolves intended to destroy the sheep by way of parley and making peace with them, it would have been a very impudent and a senseless thing to have told them, in plain terms that they had a design to devour them; and therefore they made a more dexterous and politic proposal, and promised to live peaceably and neighbourly with them, upon condition that they would deliver up their dogs. So when the late rebel faction had designed the destruction of the king and monarchy, they were not such sots as to profess and declare so much at first; no, they were only for removing his evil counsellors, that is, for sucking the blood of his best friends, and stripping him of his faithfullest ministers, and such as were most

able both to serve and support him; and then let them alone to make him as great and glorious as in the issue (you all know) they made him.

And in like manner, when the true brood and spawn of the same republican cabal was about to play the same game upon the son, which their predecessors had done upon the father, this and that counsellor was to be removed from his counsels, and banished from his royal presence for ever. And then if he would but part with his guards too, he could not with any reason have doubted of his safety, having cast himself into those hands which had brought him so many dutiful petitions. For no man questions but they, good men, would have done all they could to have secured him. Nay, I dare undertake for them, that they would not have thought any castle in the kingdom too good or strong to have bestowed him in. But he should have had all the security that Holdenby House, or Hampton Court, or Carisbrook, or Hurst, or Windsor Castle, could have afforded him; and it were much if he could not have been secure in all these. But yet if these could not have made him so, they had one way more left, which would have followed of course, and would infallibly have done it.

Only there was indeed this difference in the proceedings of the faction formerly against the father, and lately against his son, that the faction first imprisoned the father, and then addressed to him; whereas the late managers of the same design against the son libelled him with their addresses first, hoping to be able to imprison him afterwards. And this difference, let me tell you, was very material, and (thanks be to God) produced a very different issue and success to the whole proceeding. It being no small favour of Providence to kings and princes, that their enemies had sometimes rather show their anger than employ their wit.

But however, you see, by reflecting upon what has passed, that the clamour against evil counsellors was an old trusty tool, equally managed both against father and son. And I hope such as have eyes and ears, and common sense to judge by, do by this time sufficiently understand both the engine itself, and the persons who use to manage it; especially since they have been so extremely kind to the world, as by printing their politics to inform not only this, but all future ages how honestly they designed matters, and how wisely they carried them.

Well, but if evil counsellors must needs be removed, what must be done next? Why, that is a needless question. For what should be done, but to take in those in their stead who were so earnest and active to remove them? For do you think that these patriots are so fierce and zealous against ministers of state, and other high officers, for any other reason in the world but to get into their places? Or that they pitch upon this

course of crying out against others, for any other end, but because they judge it the most likely and effectual to promote themselves? It would indeed be too gross, too fulsome, and too shameless a request, for any one to come to his prince and say, "Sir, I will not be quiet unless your majesty will make me treasurer or chancellor, chief justice, or secretary of state, attorney-general, or the like; and if you will not give me such or such a great office, I will never leave troubling you, never give over petitioning, addressing, and protesting; never cease crying out, grievances, popery, pensioners, and evil counsellors, till the whole nation rings of it again; and therefore your majesty will do very prudently, and consult both your ease and safety, by removing such a great officer, and putting me your worthy petitioner into his room; and by this you will also wonderfully please and gratify your people, whom in truth I care as much for as I do for the dirt under my shoes."

These things I confess are very gross and scandalous, but as gross as they are, assure yourselves, that whensoever you hear any one clamouring against evil counsellors, this is as really and truly his sense and meaning, as if he had written his mind upon his forehead, and used every one of the forementioned expressions to a tittle.

III. The third battery which the faction plants against the government is, their recommending the most mortal enemies both of prince and people under the plausible endearing title of *public spirits*; that is the word, but private interest is the signification. But pray, what has any private man to do to concern himself for the public, but in his private station? What has this extortioner or that lace-seller to do, to mistake his prince for his apprentice, and to undertake to instruct him? What has this or that joiner to do to leave his shop, and to guard the parliament? These and the like matters belong properly to the sovereign prince, and to those whom he shall be pleased to employ under him. For surely none can be so fit to be trusted with the public weal of the nation, as he who gives the surest pledge of his concern for it, by having the greatest interest and share in it.

And therefore he who sets up for his country against his prince, goes about to make the body thrive by the decay and ruin of the head. Assuredly no man shows his zeal and love for his country so much, as he who does all he can to enable his prince both to govern and protect it; which I am sure cannot be done either by weakening or impoverishing him, by disgracing or misrepresenting him. This indeed has been the course taken by those great factors for sedition, who have shot that odious distinction like a fiery dart at the government, of the court party, and the country party; for which the country may perhaps one day have as little cause to thank them, as they

have at present to thank themselves. For I do not find that by all their noise and heat they have made themselves so considerable, as to be thought worthy to be taken off. But whether they succeed this way or no (as it were much if the same cheat should always find the same success) they know however that to be still mouthing out, "The interest of the country! the interest of the country!" is a sort of plausible well-received cant, and a sweet morsel, which never fails to be readily swallowed by the gaping rout, who always love those men best who abuse them most.

But for all this, I would have those state vermin know, that king and country are hardly terms of distinction (in the fore-mentioned kings I am sure they were not), and much less of opposition, since no man can serve his country without assisting his king, nor love his king without being concerned for his country. One involves the other, and both together make but one entire, single, undivided interest. God has joined them together, and cursed be that man, or faction of men, which would disjoin, or put them asunder.

And therefore, friends, suffer not yourselves to be imposed upon, but rest assured that all who come to you with those glossing pretences of public spirits and zeal for their country, if they do it with the least reflection upon their prince or his government, are all that time mocking and making a prey of you; they are smiting the shepherd, and that uses to be the way to scatter the flock. Alas! their design is not to preserve their country, but to prefer themselves; nay, they are making all this hectoring bustle for the country, only to get themselves into the court. They are holding up their heads to see what the government will bid for them; and if their pretences are found too old and stale to be marketable, or worth buying, you shall find them retreat, and sneak away with all that odium and contempt which is justly due to baffled, discovered cheats. And then the public spirit vanishes immediately, and the country, after all this high-flown zeal for it, is left to shift for itself.

For we must know, that when this public spirit is once raised, there are but two ways of laying it again, and those the very same which we use to take to rid ourselves of restless, importunate beggars; namely, either to give them what they desire, or resolutely to reject, and give them nothing. Now the first of these is that which beggars and public spirits do most desire. For still you must observe, that the public spirit here spoken of has always this strange property with it, that when it is most boisterous, furious, and troublesome, it is then also most desirous to be conjured down, provided it be done skilfully and privately. For as Solomon says, Prov. xxi. 14, "A gift in secret pacifieth anger," and has a wonderful ascendant over all evil spirits, but over the public one especially; which though it has all the poison

of the adder, yet has nothing of the deafness of it, forasmuch as it never "stops its ear against the charmer, if he does but charm wisely;" that is, if he applies the forementioned charm liberally and privately too. This being a rule always to be remembered, that the more public the spirit is, the more private must be the exorcism, for spirits being invisible things, must be dealt with after an invisible manner. So then this is one way of exorcising or conjuring down a public spirit, and recovering those that are possessed with it, which some of late years have called a taking them off. Though some governments have another way of taking such off, which they find much more effectual. For as in the case of beggars before hinted, so here also we must observe, that though this way of gratification, or giving, may rid the government of the importunity of the public spirit for the present, yet the same spirit will be sure to return upon it again, and perhaps with seven more in its company worse than itself, that they may also be exorcised and taken off the same way. As the very same relief which stops a beggar's mouth, and sends him away at one time, will certainly bring him, and many more with him, to the same house at another; it being not to be imagined that such customers will forsake a door only because they used to be fed at it. And therefore governors will never find this way of laying the public spirit successful; but just like a man's drinking in a fever, which may be some refreshment at present, but an increase of torment in reversion.

From whence it follows, that the other way for the government to dispossess and cast out these public spirits is certainly the wisest and most effectual, which is to give them nothing, but to defy their rage, and to despise their pretences, and to answer them as a man in place and power would answer the craving and clamour of a restless beggar, with authority and correction. For if men come once to find that nothing is to be got by being troublesome to the government, they will quickly alter their way of traffic, and come to fawn upon it, instead of barking at it; which, though it be not of much worth, I confess is yet the better worthless thing of the two. Let a governor take up such as trouble him and his people, with rigour and resolution, and make them know, if he can, that he neither fears nor needs them, and I dare undertake that he shall not be long troubled with them. If a horse grows resty, headstrong, and apt to throw his rider, surely to pamper him cannot be the way to tame him; but the discipline of the whip and spur will bring him to hand much sooner and surer than the plenties of the rack and manger.

But now, after all, what is the thing which really lies under the disguise of this plausible word *public spirit*? Why, if you would have the whole truth of it, name and thing together, it is faction and sedition rampant; it is a combination of some insolent unruly minds, to snatch the sceptre out of their prince's

hand ; it is their thrusting themselves into his peculiar business, and so, in effect, into his throne ; it is their confounding the essential bounds and limits of sovereignty and subjection, and consequently a dissolution of all government. For where such upstart aspiring mushrooms assume a right to govern, I am sure it can be no man's duty to obey.

And thus much for this sham pretence of public spirits, which has proved so troublesome to our public peace ; the fatal and malign influence of which, I think, cannot be better expressed, than by telling you, that this pretence of a public spirit has been as hurtful and mischievous to government, as that of the private spirit has been to religion.

IV. The fourth and last mighty misapplied word which I shall mention, with which the faction has of a long time been fighting against the government, is, *liberty, property, and the rights of the subject*. And so loud and tragical has the outcry about these been, that a man unacquainted with this sort of people, could imagine no less, by what he had heard, than that almost all the houses in the nation were emptied into the gaols, and that there were scarce a foot of land in the kingdom but what was seized on by the crown. And yet after all this noise, there is not a freer and a richer people upon the face of the earth than the English ; nor were they themselves ever so free and so rich before, as they have been in the reigns of two excellent princes whom they were perpetually baiting with complaints about their liberties and properties ; princes so far from wronging the subject upon either of these accounts, that as to the point of liberty, the crown has almost parted with its power of imprisoning the subject ; and as for property, it has been so far from encroaching upon the subjects' lands, that it has very near the matter parted with all its own. But I hope by this time the crown perceives that such sturdy beggars are not to be dealt with this way, and that it is neither wisdom, mercy, nor charity, to feed a bottomless pit.

But to adjust the true and proper measures of liberty, there is no people so free as those who live under a just monarchy ; there being no slavery in the world comparable to that of having many masters. And those state mountebanks, who would persuade people that there is no such thing as freedom of the subject under a monarchy, let them go seek for it in Holland and Venice, and other republics, and there they shall find a free people indeed ; that is, free to undergo any penalty which their governors shall be pleased to inflict, and free to pay any tax which they shall think fit to impose, and that without either remedy or redress, be it never so grievous. And as for any other kind of freedom, you must look for it elsewhere, if you would find it ; for it is not a commodity of the growth of those countries.

And to show further, how falsely, how partially, and unjustly this reproach has been cast upon monarchical government, that of England especially, I have heard of a certain sort of men not far off, who, when they had tied up their prince from detaining any dangerous or seditious subject in prison, thought it yet very reasonable for themselves to imprison whom they pleased, and as long as they pleased, according to that unerring rule of equity and right reason, forsooth, their own pleasure. So that, it seems, it must pass for slavery for a subject to be kept in prison by his sovereign, but liberty for the same person to be held in durance by his fellow subjects. Oh! the tyranny and impudence of some men!

But what is that liberty which they thus cry out for? Why, they would have a liberty to act those things against a prince, which some have taken a liberty to write and speak. They would have a liberty to set their insulting feet upon the necks of their fellow subjects, and those for the most part better men than themselves. They would have a liberty to plunder and fight other men out of their estates, and themselves into them. So that in short, the liberty and property that these men are so zealous for, is a liberty to invade and seize other men's properties. For, as it has been appositely and truly observed, none are generally so loud and clamorous for the security of our religion, as atheists and republicans, who have none at all: none such zealous advocates for liberty, as those who, when they are once got into power, prove the arrantest tyrants in nature; and none such mighty champions for property, as those who have neither a groat in their purse, nor an inch of land which they can call their own; but are a company of beggarly, broken, bankrupt malcontents, who have no other considerable property in the world, but never to be satisfied.

And thus I have gone over some of those popular abused words, those sly and maliciously infused slanders, by which an implacable, unruly faction has been perpetually weakening and worrying the civil government, and that with such success, that it has destroyed the very being of it once, and the settlement of it ever since.

And now, by way of consequence and deduction from the foregoing particulars, what can be so naturally inferred as this: that as the text denounces a curse to those who call "evil good, and good evil;" so it equally imports it to be a duty, and implies a blessing belonging to it, to call good *good*, and evil *evil*? It is the best oblation which we can make to truth, and the greatest charity that we can show the world. For how can government, and consequently the peace of mankind, fence and guard itself against knaves passing under the guise and character of honest men, when faction and sedition shall be called activity, and *fitness for business*, forsooth; and loyalty and conscience be sneered at

as softness and indiscretion? Never think, that either church or state can thrive upon these measures.

And here give me leave to utter a great truth, whether it please or not please, for my business here is not to please men, but to convince them of what concerns them. And it is this; that there has not been any one thing since the restitution of our church and monarchy, that has contributed more to the weakening of both, and the strengthening the hands of the faction against both, than the general discouragement and restraint of men upon all occasions, and especially from the pulpit, from giving the late villanous times and practices, and the guilty actors in them, boldly and impartially their own. This only use being made by them of all this tenderness, or rather tameness towards them, that by never hearing of their guilt, they have forgot that they were ever pardoned. They take heart, and insult and usurp the confidence which belongs only to the innocent. Nay, they have grown, they have thriven, and become powerful by this usage, it being what above all things in the world they wished for and desired, but could not (I dare say) have been so impudent as to hope for. For what could a thief or robber desire more, than having seized the prey, and possessed himself of his base booty, to carry it off both safely and quietly too; nay, and to see the person robbed by him, not only with his hands fast tied from recovering his goods, but with his tongue tied also, from so much as crying out "thief?"

But for all the fallacious state-mists which have been cast before our eyes, men have both seen and felt enough to know, that for persons of honour, power, or place, to caress and soothe up men of dangerous principles and known disaffection to the government with terms and appellations of respect, is manifestly for the government to knock underboard to the faction, to infuse courage into it, by courting it, and to make its shrewdest enemies strong and considerable, by seeming to fear those who may be suppressed, but can never be won. Besides, that this must needs grieve the hearts and damp the spirits of those who in its greatest calamities were its best, or rather its only friends; and (if occasion requires) must be so again, or it must have none.

And therefore I will be bold to affirm, that the great long rebellion being, in the whole carriage of it, so very black and foul, so reproachful to religion, so scandalous to the whole nation, and so utterly incapable, not only of excuse, but even of extenuation, especially in that last and hellish scene of it, the king's murder; I say, upon all these accounts, it cannot be too frequently, too severely, and too bitterly, upon all public occasions, ripped up and reflected upon. All the pulpits in the king's dominions ought to ring of it, as long as there is a man alive who lived when the villany was committed. Preachers, in their ser-

mons to their congregations, and judges, in their charges to the juries and justices of the country, ought to inculcate, and lay before them the horrid impiety and scandal of those proceedings, and the execrable mischief of the principles which caused them: especially since we have seen such new rebellions springing out of the ashes of the old; a sufficient demonstration, doubtless, that the fire is not yet put out. And believe it, this, if any, is the likeliest way both to atone the guilt of those crying sins, and to prevent the like for the future. And if this course had been vigorously and heartily followed, can you imagine that such devilish, audacious libels, and such seditious coffee-house discourses, could have flown in the face of the government, as have done for above twenty years together? I tell you, that neither men's courage nor their conscience would have served them to have ventured upon their prince, or attacked his government at such a daring rate. Nay, let this course be but taken yet, and the people all over the kingdom be constantly and warmly plied from the pulpits upon the particulars here spoken of, and I doubt not but in the space of three years the king shall have quite another people, and his people be taught quite another kind of subjection, from what they have practised any time these threescore years.

And therefore let none think that those seasonable rebukes which I here encourage and plead for, proceed from any hatred of the persons of those wretches (how much soever they deserve it), but from a dutiful concern for, and charity to the public, and from a just care and commiseration of posterity, that the contagion may not spread, nor the poison of the example pass any further. For I take reproof, no less than punishment, to be rather for prevention than retribution; rather to warn the innocent, than to reproach the guilty; and by thus warning them while they are innocent, in all probability to preserve and keep them so.

For does not St. Paul himself make this the great ground and end of all reproof? 1 Tim. v. 20, "Them that sin," says he, "rebuke before all, that others also may fear." And in Titus i. 13, "Rebuke them sharply." Where let us suppose now that St. Paul had to do with a pack of miscreants, who had by the most unchristian practices dethroned and murdered their prince, to whom this apostle had so often enjoined absolute subjection; plundered and undone their brethren, to whom the said apostle had so often commanded the greatest brotherly love and amity; and lastly, rent, broken, and torn in pieces the church, in which he had so earnestly pressed unity, and so severely prohibited all schismatical divisions; what, I say, do we think now? would St. Paul have rebuked such new-fashioned extraordinary Christians, or would he not? And if he would, do we imagine that he would have done it in the modern treacherous dialect? *Touch*

not my rebels, and do my fanatics no harm. No moderation-monger under heaven shall ever persuade me that St. Paul would have taken such a course with such persons, or have taught Timothy, or Titus, or any other gospel preacher, to do so, for fear of spoiling their promotion, or translation, or offending any powerful faction of men whatsoever.

And pray, do you all consider with yourselves, whether you would be willing to have your children, your dearest friends and relations, grow up into rebels, schismatics, presbyterians, independents, anabaptists, quakers, the blessed offspring of the late reforming times? And if you would not, then leave off daubing and trimming it, and plainly, impartially, and severely declare to your children and families, the villany and detestable hypocrisy of those which are such. And assure yourselves that this is the likeliest way to preserve them untainted with the same infection.

To all which considerations I shall add this one more, as an unanswerable argument, why the cursed authors of our late sad distractions should not be suffered to carry off their rogueries with the sneaking silence and connivance of all about them; namely, that by this means, about fourscore or a hundred years hence, the faction (if it continues so long, as no doubt with good keeping it may) will, from denying the impiety and the guilt, come to deny also the very history and being of the long great rebellion. This, perhaps, at first hearing may seem something odd and strange to you. But if you consider, that in the space of forty years the faction has had the face to shift off that rebellion and murder of the king from themselves upon the papists, is it at all unlikely that in the compass of threescore or fourscore years more, they may utterly deny that there was ever any such thing at all? This, I am sure, is not impossible; and considering the boldness, and falseness, and brazen confidence of the faction, I cannot think it so much as improbable. But I am sure also, that it is no less than a national concern, that following ages should not be so far ignorant of what has passed in ours, as thereby to want so great and so irrefragable an argument against disloyalty and rebellion.

And therefore, as it is said that the king never dies upon a legal account, so it is vastly the interest of the government, that the murder of the king should never die upon an historical. To which purpose, let strict, naked, and undisguised truth take place in all things; and let not evil be dignified with the title of good, nor good libelled with the name of evil, by a false and fraudulent appellation of things and persons. But as the merits of men's works must and will follow them into another world, so (in all reason and justice) let the true name of their works accompany and go along with them in this: that so the honest

and the loyal may not be degraded to the same level with knaves and rebels, nor knaves usurp the rewards and reputation which none but the honest and the loyal have a claim to.

Which God, the eternal Fountain of truth, and great Judge of all things, vouchsafe to grant; to whom be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

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